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INTERDISCURSIVE PROCESS OF ACADEMIC LITERACY SOCIALIZATION: A
QUALITATIVE INQUIRY OF KOREAN ESL STUDENTS IN A U.S. MBA PROGRAM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation reports findings from a qualitative analysis of the academic literacy socialization of five Korean graduate students in a U.S. MBA (Master of Business Administration) program as they progressed through their first two academic quarters of their education. The study specifically examines the academic literacy practices that take place in three literacy sites: a marketing course, a business ethics course, and peer study group meetings. In doing so, the main purpose is to investigate the contesting discourses around the notion of academic success that emerge in the focal students' social interactions among themselves, other students and instructors.

Drawing from the scholarship on second language academic socialization, academic literacy, and New Literacies this study was an eight-month long qualitative investigation of how five Korean graduate students conceptualized the meaning of academic success in the MBA program as they participated in the various academic literacy practices. The sources of data include students' written work, audio recordings of group and individual interviews, student peer study group meetings, classroom observations, extensive field notes and qualitative interviews.

This study's results suggest that the students' socialization is a complex and multilayered process in which students individually and collaboratively negotiate the meaning of academic success through engaging in interactive dialogues both inside and outside of the classroom. Based on the results, I argue that the students' notion of academic success is defined along the lines of business-related knowledge that go beyond merely language skills. Students with such knowledge are valorized by the instructor and given legitimacy as "academically successful" students in and outside the classroom. This discourse is rationalized through an interdiscursive process (Agha, 2005) in which specific communicative events (e.g. academic literacy events, and

storytelling events that valorize the successful international student's field knowledge) that occur in different spaces and timescales become linked to the students' here-and-now learning space. This interconnection shows how the meaning of academic success that is attached to past communicative events unfolds in present time, thus showing how events at distant places in the past are invoked and connected with the students' present academic literacy practices. Thus, the power of interdiscursivity demonstrates the complex and accumulative nature of students' academic socialization processes. Based on these dialogues, I hope to extend the continuous study on academic literacy socialization processes of graduate ESL students by considering the complex ways students negotiate and make sense of their target academic literacy practices to become "competent" students in their field of study.

To Mom, Dad, and Sister

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Introduction and Purpose

Shinpill and I sit down on a green couch in the business college building to begin one of our interviews concerning his academic literacy experiences in the MBA program. As Shinpill warms up to the interview questions, he commences a steady stream of stories of himself, his peers and what it means to do well in the program. His stories are coupled with insightful analysis. As Shinpill talks about the MBA program and the core course assignments, he tells me that group projects constitute a large percentage of final grades; therefore, member contribution to group work often defines one's academic reputation in the program. He explains that through group work, word gets around quickly about the weaknesses and strengths of everyone's "academic" and social skills. When I ask him about his reputation in the program, he says he is known as one of the "model" students, which is a label the marketing instructor, Dr. Johnson, had given him because of his exceptional marketing management skills. In contrast to this image, Shinpill tells me that the worst case is to be labeled a "free rider" by his colleagues. He defines the term as a student who "seems to talk a lot, but has little to offer in the group assignments." Shinpill tells me that in retrospect he didn't talk much during group work or in the classroom because he felt his "English isn't good enough, like the native speakers." But he reminds me that he has never seen himself as a free rider. On the contrary, he tells me that his expertise in marketing gives him more leverage as a group member. As he briefly explains,

I'm okay with my level of English. I find it more valuable to have expert knowledge that will directly benefit the group. Even in the memos [individual writing assignments], if you don't have background knowledge it's really hard to write anything. The rest [the language part], you can get it proofread by a native speaker. I think I'd rather be a smart non-native speaker than be fluent in English and have really nothing to offer (Interview, translated into English, Shinpill, October 25, 2012).

Despite the view that his English communication was limited, Shinpill did not position himself as a “free rider” in group dynamics. Rather, he believed that certain forms of valued knowledge afforded him more power and agency in his peer group. Thus, in order for Shinpill to cross borders and identify himself as a worthy member of his peer study group, Shinpill appears to downplay English and emphasize his knowledge skills (e.g. marketing management skills). By appropriating his prior knowledge skills into the learning context of the peer study group, Shinpill tells me that knowledge skills that go beyond language skills are more important to academically succeed in the program (Interview notes, October 25, 2012). His response instigated for me a gradual reconceptualization of academic literacy practices for Shinpill and a group of Korean graduate students in a U.S. MBA program, particularly in relation to language and knowledge. It also made me curious about how these students positioned themselves and were positioned by other students and instructors in various academic contexts particularly in relation to knowledge, and in doing so, how they individually and collectively conceptualized the meaning of academic success in the MBA program.

This dissertation provides a multi-dimensional view of the academic literacy socialization processes of a group of ESL Korean graduate students in their first two academic quarters of their MBA education. In this investigation, I am particularly interested in examining the contesting discourses around the notion of academic success that emerge in the focal students' dialogues among themselves, other students and instructors. Fundamental to the academic socialization processes and academic literacies of students in the early period of their graduate

study is the dynamic and complex relationship between various academic literacy activities, students and instructors, and the extent to which peer conversations outside the classroom influence their academic literacy socialization. Therefore, this dissertation includes various types of detailed analyses of both classroom and outside the classroom dialogues that focuses on the relationship between knowledge and language, social relationships, and academic success.

More specifically, building on theories of academic literacy socialization, academic literacy, and New Literacies this dissertation uses an interdiscursive approach (Agha, 2005) from linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics to examine the dynamic relationship between various academic literacy events in three literacy sites: the marketing class, the business ethics class, and the peer study group gatherings. Underlining the social interactions that occurred in the three sites, the dialogic interactions that the students engaged in during the first two academic quarters were assumed to be key in analyzing their academic socialization experiences. These interactions not only functioned as tools for understanding students' academic literacy socialization processes, but they also served students themselves as tools for empowerment. I put these dialogues at the heart of my research while investigating the students' academic literacy.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a continuous increase in the number of international students in business and engineering graduate programs in North American institutions of higher education ¹. Upon graduation, while some of them stay in the United States with the intention of going into academic or business related professions, others return to their home countries to land

¹ The number of international students enrolled in business programs in the U.S. colleges and universities was reported as 166,733 in 2012 and 178,984 in 2013 according to the Open Doors 2013 annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (IIE). Business and Engineering programs together comprised 47% of all international graduate students in 2012.

professional jobs. Most of those students complete their first college degrees in their home countries and are proficient users of the English language when they begin their post-graduate study in the United States. More specifically, those international students who pursue a business degree come to the U.S. with long years of work experiences in their home countries (Open Doors, 2013); thus they bring with them a rich array of social and cultural experiences that influences their academic experiences in the United States.

Due to the rapidly changing demographics in graduate schools such as the MBA program at North American institutions², many scholars and educators have researched dilemmas and struggles in academic studies when exploring the academic literacy experiences of student groups coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (e.g. immigrants or 1.5. generations, ESL students). In these studies, topics such as academic socialization, disciplinary enculturation, acquisition of academic literacies, and the development of identity and voice among multilingual students have been explored by a number of scholars (Casanave, 2002; Leki, 2003; Spack, 2004). Some of the overarching findings of these studies suggest that academic literacy socialization is a complex and lengthy process; academic practices are embedded in larger frameworks of social and institutional practices; and academic practices do not raise simply linguistic issues, but also social and political ones. The concepts of identity, practice, interaction, enculturation, and socialization are viewed as intertwined and lie at the heart of investigations of academic literacy learning and use in academic communities. These studies also suggest that academic communities in U.S. institutions are not homogeneous and static, leading

² The current MBA program of the university in this study had the highest number of international students within its state. China and India were the top two leading places of origin for foreign students at the MBA program with South Korea coming in third (Illinois-Open-Doors-2012).

scholars and teachers to reconceptualize the notion of academic literacy education while attempting to address the needs and expectations of diverse student population.

Although there has been and continues to be mounting research on the academic literacy practices of ESL students and 1.5 generation students (e.g. Harklau, 2000), relatively little is known about Korean students who come to the U.S. to pursue graduate work, and more specifically to pursue professional graduate degrees such as in the MBA programs. Yet, compared to other academic disciplinary fields, professional graduate programs such as MBA programs are a crucial network space not only for constructing knowledge and displaying expertise, but also for building professional social relationships. In this level of higher education, students are expected to engage intensely in the production of linguistically and intellectually sophisticated texts utilizing various speaking “rhetorical moves” (Swales, 1990) needed in the professional business world. Furthermore, students are expected to be active participants in various academic workshops and communities in their field. Navigating the academic world of any graduate programs such as an MBA program becomes more complex when it involves students whose home language and culture are different than that of the mainstream within the university. Therefore, given the continuous growth of foreign students in North American institutions, it is worthwhile to investigate how a specific group of ESL students acquire and socialize into a Western professional graduate program and construct their understanding of what it means to be successful students in their chosen field of study.

In more recent studies, several researchers in first and second language academic literacy education have explored how, in the context of higher education, ‘novice’ or ‘newcomers’ are socialized into their discourse communities (Canagarajah, 2002; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001). These studies are also valuable in the sense that they shed light on the types of literacy practices

ESL students need to adopt, or the kinds of social processes they tend to experience during their academic socialization period. However, despite the highly interactive nature of graduate education in the U.S. (e.g. writing papers, working on group projects, making presentations, engaging in academic conversations and discussions), little research has been conducted regarding how ESL graduate students also collectively socialize into academic communities as they move through their graduate experiences. Although it is assumed that collaboration takes place among them, the collaborative nature of their dialogues, the social interaction within students' peer groups, the collective discourses of academic success in their discipline, and its impact on students' academic literacy socialization has not been further researched.

Another important gap that needs to be addressed is the nature of first year graduate students' academic socialization, particularly in the realm of academic literacy. Investigating the academic literacy socialization of new graduate students, particularly in their first academic semester, is an important enterprise, as the attrition rate during the first semester is almost a third of all graduate student attrition (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992). This information is particularly important when we consider the international students studying in U.S. graduate schools. In this context, the challenges that these students experience in the first semester compared to the succeeding years of study could be even greater, as they may lack certain cultural and linguistic capital that is necessary to successfully function in their discipline. Many graduate students have indicated that their first year in general is the most challenging and stressful (Golde, 2000), but there is a lack of research on what happens during those crucial periods. Therefore, this study aims to examine a group of ESL students' first two academic quarters of their study in order to identify and better understand the types of academic literacy socialization processes that occur in

the three literacy sites of this study, and understand how they define what it means to be successful students in their field of study.

Expected Contribution of the Study

My study contributes to what is known about ESL graduate students' socialization into academic disciplines in two different ways. First of all, relatively little is known about the various processes ESL Korean graduate students engage in during their first academic semester as they seek to unravel what is expected from them as graduate students. The focus on a particular group of Korean students offers insight into both the reasoning and the resources surrounding the Korean students' participation in the various academic literacy practices involved in the specific field of business.

A second area of contribution of this study lies in its methodology. Earlier studies conducted on graduate students' socialization were restricted to more conventional methodologies, such as surveys, interviews, and case studies. While this study adopts a qualitative approach as its main methodological framework, it also draws methodologies from linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics (Agha, 2005; Bauman, 2005; Silverstein, 2005). By using an interdiscursive approach from linguistic anthropology (Agha, 2005), this study further explores various communicative events (e.g. academic literacy events and storytelling events) in different spaces and timescales that influence the Korean students' current academic socialization experiences. Therefore, this dissertation delves deeper into the complex, multi-layered and non-linear nature of their socialization processes. Using multiple methods to gather and analyze data, this qualitative study also brings in the Korean students' academic, professional and cultural perspectives as it informs their academic socialization.

The rationale behind looking at such micro level analysis of various academic literacies is that “while the individual is the locus of learning, this learning does not take place in isolation” (Erickson, 1982, p. 150). Borrowing the idea of spatiotemporal extension from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to explain how interdiscursivity works in investigating the interconnection of various communicative events in this study, the spatiotemporal extension links spatially and temporally distant events with the here-and-now of students’ learning experience, setting up the accumulative nature of their socialization experiences. Similarly, the micro analysis of these processes also offers insights into the larger macroanalytical issues regarding academic literacy, such as the social and cultural contexts influencing the students’ academic literacies, the kinds of academic literacy practices they adopt, and the type of strategies they employ to produce acceptable academic products. Chapter 4 will further discuss the nature of this interdiscursive process as it relates to the students’ socialization processes.

In summary, invoking an interdisciplinary framework as well as expanding the borders of research on L2 academic literacy in general, this study contributes to the continuously growing body of research on academic socialization.

Research Questions

The central research question I explore in this study is: What are some of the academic socialization processes that a group of Korean students undergo as they define the meaning of academic success in their field of study?

1. How did a group of Korean students interpret, negotiate, and make meaning from information presented in the academic literacy practices of the MBA program?
 - a. What is the nature of the academic literacy practices of the MBA program?

- b. What academic literacy practices did a group of Korean students struggle most to make meaning of?
 - c. In the various academic literacy practices that occur in the three literacy sites, how are the focal students' and faculty's perceptions of valued academic literacy practices different from or similar to one another with regards to the notion of academic success?
2. How are the focal Korean students represented in the MBA classrooms?
- a. How do the students' investments in learning the subject matter of the ethics course inform their identity in the course as perceived by the instructor and other students in the classroom?
 - b. How are the students represented in the discourse of the marketing classroom?
3. How do the focal Korean students mediate their construction and negotiation of academic literacies in their peer social groups as they rework the meaning of academic success?
- a. What alternative meanings and spaces do they construct through the various academic literacy practices as they build their identities in the MBA community?
 - b. Specifically, what kinds of symbolic resources from the business courses are provided for these students as they negotiate between multiple identities in their peer social groups?
 - c. How are the focal students' ideologies about otherness, difference and identity categories reworked in their peer group social interaction (spoken and written) as they conceptualize the meaning of academic success?

Definition of Key Terms

Several key terms were especially important in conducting this study. These are defined below.

1. **Academic literacy:** Drawing from the sociocultural perspective of literacy, academic literacy, in this study, is perceived as multiple and situated (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). The term is also used in its plural form (i.e. academic literacies) by researchers who conceptualize academic literacy as including a wide range of communicative practices (Lea & Street, 2000). Academic literacy, in this study, includes ways a group of students interpret the social and cultural expectations of successful learning in the particular contexts of a MBA program. Academic literacies in this study include the oral and written social interactions about core courses, writing short business memos in English, learning to hold the conversational floor in front of a large audience, and learning to collaborate with other peers in group projects.

2. **Academic literacy practices:** The term refers to what people do with academic literacy. It is interpreted as a social practice, something people do with various texts to participate in the construction of knowledge, values, attitudes, beliefs and feelings associated with the reading, writing, and speaking within particular academic contexts (Street 1984). In this study, the particular academic literacy practices, for example, consist of sharing knowledge in peer study groups and in the classroom through dialogue and written texts.

3. **Academic literacy events:** Drawing on Heath (1983), the academic literacy events in this study are the everyday activities that include spoken or written text. In this study, I view it as any piece of dialogue (written and oral) that is integral to the focal students' negotiation of the target academic literacies in the MBA program. Similar to the ideas developed by sociolinguistics, the academic literacy events, in this study, are also perceived as "social event[s] of verbal interaction

rather than formal linguistic properties of texts in isolation” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 9). As will be described in detail in the dissertation, the academic literacy events that the students participate in are also linked to various academic literacy events that took place in diverse spaces and timescales.

4. **Academic socialization:** Building on Lea and Street’s (1999) academic literacies model, academic socialization, in this study, is operationalized as students’ negotiation of different academic literacy practices and as construction of new meanings and social identities. Learning of academic literacy practices in this study is seen as an important part of academic socialization. Thus, in this study the term academic socialization is interchangeably used with academic literacy socialization to indicate the students’ evolving academic literacy practices.

5. **Discourse:** In this study, discourse was operationalized as stemming from a combination of various approaches, including Gee (1990) where he portrays discourse as an “identity kit” which instructs people in “how to act, talk [. . .] so as to take on a particular social role that others might recognize” (p. 142). In another sociolinguistic perspective, discourse is defined as “social practices associated with a particular set of values, social beliefs and power relations” (Ivanic, 1998, p. 18). Employing a sociolinguistic point of view, this study also views discourse as a set of values and beliefs that occur in the students’ academic participation in their first two academic quarters of their MBA education.

6. **Discourse communities:** In this study, discourse community is defined as a group of people held together by their common characteristics of talking, believing, acting, and interpreting (Swales, 1990). The focal Korean students in this study were members of several overlapping and shifting discourse communities. While the students seemed to identify themselves with

Korean students or other international student communities, at times, they also identified with academic communities such as the student council.

7. **ESL:** English as a Second Language

8. **Identity:** For the purpose of this study, identity is defined as a social practice within the notion of “being and becoming” (Giampapa, 2004). In this study, the focus on the dialogic relationship within the social interactions surrounding students’ academic literacy practices reveals the ways students and instructors become socially identified as certain types of people. The focal students’ identities evolve through dialogic interaction in various academic contexts (e.g. peer group gatherings, marketing class, ethics class). Identity is important in this study because certain types of the students’ identities are constructed and reproduced as they participate in various academic literacy practices in the three literacy sites of this study.

9. **Interdiscursivity:** In its simplest form, interdiscursivity means “features of discourse [that] establish forms of connectivity across events of using discourse” (Agha, 2005, p. 1). Building on the notion of intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1986), interdiscursivity draws the attention in my study to how students’ process of meaning-making takes place across various academic contexts in different spaces and timescales in the MBA program. Interdiscursivity in this study emphasizes the relationship between relevant academic literacy events by showing how these events are interconnected (Silverstein, 2005). An understanding of interdiscursivity offers an important way of looking into the meaning-making systems of institutional power, social differentiation and cultural beliefs that create identities for the students.

10. **Literacy:** Going beyond the traditional view of literacy as a neutral and technical skill, this study views literacy as meaningful social and cultural practices (Street, 1984) of a particular group of people situated in an academic context imbued with particular social and cultural

expectations about learning. In this study, literacy is mediated by ways students make meaning of the written assignments and oral presentations in the particular academic contexts in the field of business.

11. **Space:** Deriving its meaning from sociolinguistics, it is viewed, in this study, as a situated context that is “inhabited, appropriated, shaped and (re)configured” by individuals during their participation in various learning events (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005 p. 206). The notion of space is relevant in this study because it offers a situated assessment of students’ competency as successful students, and presents how different kinds of indexical meanings of academic success is configured in the various spaces of this study.

Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized in order to demonstrate how the social discourse concerning academic success informs how the focal students navigate the various academic literacy practices in the MBA program. The macro context of Korean discourse on success and the micro discourses of the focal students’ conceptualization of academic success organize this study. The dissertation chapters are outlined according to the three literacy sites in which the focal students participate. From my findings I hope to present the analytical themes that are unique to this group of Korean students and the nature of the academic literacy practices they participate in.

Chapter 2 brings together the theoretical framework and research studies that guided the investigation concerning the academic literacy socialization of a group of Korean ESL students. In this chapter I discuss theories and studies on second language academic socialization, academic literacy, and New Literacies. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the Korean sociocultural discourse on academic success as this discourse may shed light on how the focal Korean participants in this study make meaning of their socialization into the MBA program.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and study design of this study. It will provide information that will help in understanding the context of this study. By context, I refer both to the physical space in which the study is situated, but also to the MBA program community's meanings and interactional characteristics that help situate my understanding of the participants and their local academic literacy practices. This chapter also considers my relation to the participants, which I find important in understanding their responses, and the findings of this study.

Chapter 4 begins the findings chapters of this study. This chapter further explains the value of interdiscursivity and illustrates in detail the interdiscursive process of how a group of Korean ESL students becomes socially identified as “model international” students as they participate in the academic literacy activities of the marketing class. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the “model international” student identity in the marketing class comes to be defined along the dimension of intellectual knowledge, which eventually becomes the basis of how academic success is defined for the focal participants.

Chapter 5 portrays in detail the academic literacy practices enacted in the business ethics class by the focal students. I show how their current identity in the ethics class and the curriculum subject matter of ethics become deeply intertwined, and that the students become typified based on categories of identity uniquely available within the subject matter of ethics. In this chapter, I intend to display the complex process of constructing what it means to be “good” and “ethical” individuals as the students navigate the academic literacy activities in the ethics classroom.

Chapter 6 examines how the focal students' notion of academic success informs the social dynamics and power structures that emerge within their peer study groups. I look into

notions of symbolic capital, social reproduction and how the identity of the “model international” student becomes interdiscursively reappropriated in the peer group dynamic.

Chapter 7 summarizes all findings and offers a lens of how to understand the differing voices that constitute the meaning of academic success. I then provide suggestions to future research and educational practice in order to show a different perspective into a group ESL Korean graduate students’ academic socialization experiences. I refer back to the notion of academic success and hope to provide a new perspective on how these students interpret what it means to successfully socialize oneself into a new academic environment. It is a perspective that goes beyond the scope of language learning to include field specific knowledge and expertise. By understanding the complicated discourses of academic success, a group of ESL Korean students’ socialization processes can better be understood.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background and Review of Literature

Introduction

Shinpill, one of the Korean participants, was recognized in class by the marketing instructor for ranking first place in one of the marketing projects. He tells me that this recognition has given him more confidence to speak out in class (informal conversation, November 13, 2012). During one of my visits in Shinpill's group gathering, a handful of Asian students gather around Shinpill asking him what strategies he took to get the highest score on the marketing project. As Shinpill explains his strategy, the conversation segues into Shinpill also giving general advice to his Asian friends about ways to "do well" in the core courses:

Just don't be afraid and do what you are good at. When you are in marketing class or economics or any kind of class, you don't have to force yourself to speak. I didn't speak a lot. When Dr. Johnson ask[s] me questions in class, he ask questions I have answers to like Korean market or something like that. Other students, like [the]native speakers, usually don't have interesting thing to say but talk about ideas or examples from media. So you can prove yourself with knowledge or information that is exceptional. Then it will be easier for the professor to remember you, and you do not look bad in the class. If you can't find any information to give, then I don't know, just smile [. . .] I have marketing background, so I use that information for the assignment. It is a resource for me. So, we have to try to look resourceful [Originally in English]. (Shinpill, observation notes, November 13, 2012)

Among all the stories I have heard through student peer interaction and in individual interviews about various ways to succeed in the MBA program, I found the focal students' process of meaning making of their academic experiences quite unique in that certain forms of knowledge and skills had precedence over language skills. For the focal students, knowledge was a tool for them to navigate the different academic contexts in the program, and it was also a means to position themselves as "worthy" students among their peers. As they made sense of the academic literacy expectations in various academic contexts, they also strived to build an identity for

themselves that differentiated them from the native speakers. For example, in the peer study group dynamics seen in chapter 6, a group of Korean focal students evaluated their worth and others' through the performance of one's field knowledge. As one's field knowledge became a valuable resource for these students, they used it to differentiate themselves from the native speakers and to establish a peer social hierarchy based on this ideology (field knowledge has precedence over other skills). Thus, according to the focal students, those with such capital had relatively more agency to jockey for a position in the peer groups. This exemplifies how the focal students' socialization experience was a social and political process.

In order to understand the complex nature of students' socialization processes, this chapter describes the findings of several studies on second language socialization, academic literacies, and academic socialization. The theoretical background provided in this chapter is embedded in how this study's research questions were shaped and how the findings of this study will be presented in later chapters. In what follows, I will first provide an overview of previous research and the theoretical foundations of second language socialization, which collectively serve as a theoretical framework for generating a deep understanding of the academic socialization and academic literacies of ESL learners. Next, I will describe theories and research on second language academic literacies, specifically focusing on the university setting, since that was the setting in which this study took place. In that section, I will include research conducted both in U.S. and non-U.S. contexts that examines the academic discourse socialization (both oral and written) of different student populations. Then, I will present studies conducted specifically on graduate students' second language academic literacy development and academic socialization, since this study focused on such students.

Finally, because the focal Korean students in my study come from a culture different from that of the U.S. academia, I feel it is also important to briefly highlight the Korean sociocultural discourse on language (English) and education as it relates to ways the focal students interpret their academic experiences and conceptualize the discourse of academic success in the MBA program.

Second Language Socialization and Academic Socialization

Second language (L2) socialization research shares similar principles and underpinnings with first language socialization studies, which have been influenced by fields such as linguistic anthropology³ (e.g., Hymes, 1974; Heath, 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), cultural psychology (e.g., Rogoff, 1990), sociolinguistics (e.g., Gee, 1996; Gumperz 1981, 2001) and sociocultural theories (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978). The language socialization framework, which was originally developed by linguistic anthropologists Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin (1986) with their ground-breaking study in Western Samoa, deals with people interacting in their social contexts. In their seminal study, Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) studied the everyday oral language routines of adults and children, including praising, shaming, teasing and greeting. In this framework, the locus of learning has been perceived, in their words, as “socialization through language and socialization to use language” (p.2), in which “children and other novices in society acquire tacit knowledge of principles of social order and systems of belief through exposure to and participation in language-mediated interaction” (p. 2-3). Although language socialization starts

³ While there is convergence between linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, Duranti (2009) notes that the differentiation of the two terms has to do with different professional identities and theoretical interests. In the 1960s and 70s they were thought of as one field, and they have moved further apart since that time. Linguistic anthropology can be defined as “*the study of language within the context of anthropology*” (Hymes, 1964, xxiii. Original emphasis), while sociolinguistics is viewed as the “systematic attention to broad patterns of variations in linguistic forms” to the social context of their use (Duranti, 2009, p.8).

from the beginning of childhood, it is also viewed as a life-long process which involves “the process by which novices and newcomers in a community or culture gain communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy in the group” (Duff, 2007, p. 37).

Researchers inspired by the language socialization framework have looked at literacy socialization in a wide range of settings. For instance, Heath’s (1983) influential study, *Ways with Words*, examined children’s use of language and narrative at home and in school. In this study, Heath bridges the theories of language socialization with the field of literacy education and shows how the different patterns of interaction (oral and written) at home and in school can impact children’s literacy education, where children may need to “reformulate their home habits of handling knowledge and ways of talking about knowledge” (p.355). A number of other educationally oriented studies (e.g. Baquedano-Lopez, 2004; Kim & Duff, 2012), like Heath’s, aimed to address possible cultural gaps between the discourse practices at home, in communities, and in school.

Although theories and research on language socialization have mostly dealt with children and adults who socialize into a specific context or community through the use of their first language, these theories about language and learning have also informed research on how second language users socialize into new contexts. Given the increasing size of the immigrant student population in the U.S., many second language researchers have turned their attention to the theories of language socialization, which aim to explain “how persons become competent members of social groups” (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1996, p. 167). It was also around the same time, the 1980s and 90s, when the “social turn” began to take place in the second language field, and researchers began to stress the imbalance between cognitive and social orientations to language

learning (Hall, 1997; Lantof, 2000 among others) through the influence of language socialization.

The cognitive view of second language learning was replaced by a sociocultural view of second language learning, which underscores that learners in naturally occurring settings, “use [the new language] interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes” (Firth & Wegner, 1997, p. 297). In this view, language is not only perceived as a set of codes, but also as ways of speaking. Therefore, language learning is not composed of learning the structure of language by focusing only on its grammar, but learning a wide range of speech acts in multiple speech events (Hymes, 1974). This view of language occurring in a context, and learners becoming communicatively competent has been a major influence on how the L2 field conceptualizes language learners and language learning. As the learners’ mental L2 knowledge is not available to investigate, researchers began to explore the actual utterances that learners produce both in writing and speaking. Hymes, for instance, studied the ability to participate appropriately in relevant speech events, an ability that requires more than grammatical knowledge. In this view, learners must also acquire knowledge of what the speakers of the target language expect, linguistically and culturally, within interactions. The linguistic anthropologists’ view of language coupled with educational ethnographers has led many second language scholars to turn their attention to ethnographic studies in which they examine L2 learners’ linguistic and cultural practices within naturally occurring social interactions (e.g., Lantof & Pavlenko, 2001) and, more theoretically, within a language socialization framework.

Although first language and second language socialization share many commonalities (e.g., Duff, 2003; Watson-Gegeo, 2004), second language socialization includes another complex layer of socialization, in that children and adults already possess linguistic and cultural

knowledge of their first language and successfully function in various communities in which they are affiliated. The complexity appears when second language speakers experience difficulty in gaining access and acceptance in a second or target language setting. This results in second language speakers' resisting or opposing the target community's values and belief systems and attempting to negotiate their identities or vernacular literacy practices, which might lead to the newcomers not being fully invested in socializing into the new community (e.g. Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko & Lantof, 2001). The studies which have focused on the disjunction between the learners' home language and culture and that of the school setting have typically investigated the L2 students' acculturation into new oral and written discourses within various academic contexts and their socialization into various contexts such as post-secondary programs and workplaces (e.g., Norton & Toohey, 2001).

Second language speakers' socialization into the new English speaking communities is successfully illustrated by Pavlenko and Lantof (2001). In this study, Pavlenko and Lantof analyze first-person narratives of several immigrant authors with Eastern European background. Following Sfar's (1998) distinction between the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor, the authors claim that the L2 field has been dominated by the acquisition metaphor, which stresses the idea that language learning entails only linguistic knowledge. Similar to Sfar's acquisition metaphor, the cognitive orientation of the field is usually associated with information processor metaphors separating individuals' mind and their environment. The participation metaphor, on the other hand, views language learning as "a process of becoming a member of a certain community" (Sfar, 1998, as cited in Pavlenko & Lantof, 2001, p.155). The narratives of bilingual adults examined in this study illustrate the importance of the active

participation of bilingual adults in their target community and their day-to-day challenges and internal conflicts in the process of moving into a new set of discursive practices.

Pavlenko and Lantof (2001) explain this process in separate phases. The first phase is the phase of loss, which is segmented into five stages: 1) loss of one's linguistic identity; 2) loss of all subjectivities, 3) loss of the frame of reference and the link between the signifier and the signified, 4) loss of the inner voice, and 5) first language attrition. The second phase is called the phase of recovery and includes 1) appropriating others' voices; 2) emergence of one's new voice, 3) translation therapy, resulting in the reconstruction of one's past; and 4) continuous growth "into" new positions and subjectivities (Pavlenko & Lantof, 2001).

The East European participants in Pavlenko and Lantof's study explain how they experienced losing their voice in their native language, and then gaining a new voice in English through participation in the discursive practices of the target language community. The inner conflicts depicted in their narratives are explained as resembling the inner speech mentioned in Vygotsky's work and private dialog in Bakhtin's work. For both perspectives, as the authors put it, "inner speech functions to organize and makes sense of a person's experiences of the world" (p.165).

Studies on second language socialization have also examined various student populations (i.e., elementary, secondary, post-secondary) socialization in a wide range of settings in the U.S. and Canada. The studies could also be identified as studies of academic socialization. While some of these studies focused on code-switching in bilingual and multilingual contexts in the U.S. (e.g., Schecter & Bayley, 1997), others focused on the communication difficulties of immigrants in elementary, secondary and post-secondary classrooms in the American and

Canadian contexts (Duff, 2002; Matsuda et. al, 2003). This line of research has illustrated the importance of oral discourse, scaffolding and peer feedback in academic discourse.

Concepts of identity, knowing, social membership and participation are also defined as important components in students' socialization processes. As shown in Morita's case study of six Japanese graduate students studying in a Canadian university, the students' participation in the classroom discourse did not depend only on their active involvement, but was also heavily influenced by how they were positioned by their classmates and course instructors. Morita's study focused on how international graduate students negotiate participation, identity and membership in their classrooms. Employing a multiple case study approach, Morita interviewed six female first-year Japanese students in three different academic departments. Morita's analysis of the classroom discourse of those six Japanese students suggests that the students were struggling to be recognized as legitimate members of their classroom community while negotiating discourses, competence, identities and power relations. According to Morita (2004), these negotiations varied according to individual students' sociocultural backgrounds, histories and goals. One common identity that emerged from Morita's participants' comments was that of being less competent than the other students in the class. Students constructed these "incompetent" selves based on their struggles in not fully understanding the classroom readings, or not actively contributing to class discussions. Some of the main reasons for their nonparticipation and silence in their classes derived from the learners' belief that their English was not good enough to express their ideas and their knowledge of North American popular culture.

Morita asserted that the students' silence meant different things in different courses. When the students struggled to participate, it was at least in part because they had developed the

identity of being less competent members of their classroom communities. Behind their silence, there were not only issues related to language but also power relations, classroom pedagogy, culture and identity. While some instructors associated them with certain identities, which were difficult to overcome since they were imposed by the instructors as the recognized experts of the new communities, other instructors assisted them in taking on an empowered role in the classroom.

Morita's study demonstrates that the construction of learners' agency is not a "peaceful, collaborative process, but is often a struggle involving a web of power relations and competing agendas" (p.597). Morita's study is especially important and urgent, as there are few studies conducted on classroom participation and interaction of non-Anglo students at the graduate level. Studies such as Morita's assert that it is not only the newcomers' responsibility to gain access the community's practices; instructors should also question what sort of roles and status are given to students in their classrooms. Moreover, Morita notes that in an academic context, native speaking students and teachers are not the dominant group or the norm; in fact, they are also peripheral participants who need to be socialized into international student communities (Morita, 2004). This is a significant insight within the framework of this dissertation, as the focal student participants of this study interacted with a wide range of members of academic discourse communities who were also in the process of socialization into their communities.

In summary, second language socialization studies drawing from the framework of language socialization have focused on diverse students' participation in various academic communities. The overarching finding of these studies is that although these students seemingly had access to the target community's discourses, they had difficulty in socializing due to various issues such as lack of involvement in the target community's culture or the disjunction between

students' vernacular cultures and school culture, which eventually influenced their school achievement. It is also important to note that although the literature review presented in this section specifically focused on immigrants' socialization into academic communities, researchers also focused on various bilingual and multilingual students' socialization in various communities in the US and non-US contexts.

Research on second language socialization into academic discourse, which has its roots in language socialization studies, also coincides with research on second language academic literacies, which is the focus of the second part of this literature review. Foregrounding linguistic, cultural and social interactions in a wide range of contexts, research on second language socialization mostly documents how international students who temporarily come to North America to pursue further education shuttle between different language codes and cultural meanings. The above-mentioned studies analyzed the hybrid identities and social practices that L2 communities reproduce as a result of negotiating their own and the target community's values and practices. Likewise, the present study illustrates the types of negotiations and socialization processes that international L2 students undergo inside and outside the classroom context.

While this dissertation research draws from second language socialization as a component of its theoretical framework, it also combines the theories and research conducted on first and second language academic literacies. The focal participants of this study also went through a complex set of socialization processes which included a wide range of academic literacy practices that they needed to learn to become legitimate participants of their academic communities. The next section will present a social view of literacy, particularly focusing on different uses of literacy, and the type of work done in both L1 and L2 literacy fields through the use of qualitative and other anthropological methodologies.

Research and Theory from a Social View of Literacies

Another line of research that I used as a theoretical lens to understand the academic literacy socialization of a group of ESL Korean students is the notion of academic literacies as *situated* and *multiple* (Barton et. al, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lea & Street, 2000), which are some of the major underpinnings of the approach called the New Literacy Studies. In the L1 literacy field, Street (1995), one of the leading scholars of the New Literacy Studies, defines two models of literacy: the “autonomous” and the “ideological.” While the autonomous model of literacy conceptualizes literacy as a set of isolated skills, independent of social context (product oriented), the ideological model of literacy portrays literacy as a set of culturally and politically involved practices, in which literacy activities must be seen within the larger context in which they occur (process oriented).

Adopting an ethnographic perspective on literacy, Street (1984) analyzes various literacy practices. In his view, the concept of literacy practices involves not only individual’s knowledge of reading and writing, but also “behavior and conceptualizations related to the use of reading and writing” (p.12). In his work on Iranian villagers’ reading and writing practices, Street (1984) reveals the ideological aspect of literacy practices. His ethnographic work on Iranian villagers’ literacy activities in Koranic schools raises many thought-provoking questions, such as what counts as literacy and illiteracy in different educational and non-educational contexts. The series of investigations Street conducted in various places around the globe showed that there is a dominant discourse in mainstream schooling about what literacy is and how it is used. This mainstream understanding of literacy does not always recognize various local literacy practices performed by local people. The local people in Street’s research used reading and writing in various contexts, but not in the way teachers valued literacy.

A similar observation was made by Heath in her influential book *Ways with Words* (1983) when she investigated a wide range of literacies at home and school communities. Heath's definition of literacy captures the multiple and situated nature of literacy. As she put it: "the concept of literacy covers a multiplicity of meanings, and definitions of literacy carry implicit but generally unrecognized views of its functions (what literacy can do for individuals) and its uses (what individuals can do with literacy) (Heath, 1980, p.3). This view of literacy has also been supported by other important scholars such as Barton (1994) and Barton and Hamilton (1998), who have made major contributions to the development of the social view of literacies.

For instance, Barton's ecological view of literacy underscores the strong connection between individuals and their social environment and the emphasis on "the social and mental embeddedness of human activities in a way which allows change" (Barton, 1994, p.32). Emphasizing literacy's embeddedness in social life, Barton (1994) describes his ecological views on literacy as follows:

Instead of studying the separate skills which underlie reading and writing, it involves a shift to studying *literacy*, a set of social practices associated with particular symbol systems and their related technologies. To be literate is to be active; it is to be confident within these practices (p. x).

This ecology metaphor of literacy contributes to the current understanding of the social view of literacy. Building on Street's and Heath's social view of literacy, Barton et. al (2000) define literacy practices as "the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape" (Barton et. al, 2000 p. 7), and literacy events as "activities where literacy has a role" (p.8) and is used as a "part of a range of semiotic systems" (p. 9). In this social view of literacy, literacy is situated in broader social processes and perceived as part of everyday life (Barton et al., 2000). More specifically,

literacies of everyday life are “positioned in relation to the social institutions and power relations which sustain them” (Barton et. al 2000, p.1). Building on this view, the word literacy has been used in its plural form by many scholars, as it applies to a wide range of knowledge and competencies, such as computer literacy, visual literacy, political literacy, cultural literacy and academic literacy. This broader social understanding of literacy is extended to be used to mean “competent and knowledgeable in specialized areas” (Barton, 1994, p.19). In this multiple view of literacies, individual can possess and navigate in more than one type of literacy, so the plural term literacies is used rather than the singular term literacy to broaden the notion of an individual’s connections with literacy.

The research and theory on both L1 and L2 literacy has moved a long way from the view of literacy as a set of autonomous skills to acquire. Because the traditional view of literacy has not fully captured the multiple and conflicting literacy experiences of diverse student populations both in U.S. and non-U.S. contexts, many scholars have turned their attention to more ethnographic investigations focusing on the social, cultural and political processes that students from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds undergo.

Academic literacies, academic socialization and study skills. Lea & Street (2000) have identified three oft-cited models in higher education research: *study skills*, *academic socialization*, and *academic literacies*. According to them, the study skills model coincides with the previously cited autonomous view of literacy that puts the emphasis on a set of writing skills and knowledge that exist apart from any specific context, while both the academic socialization and academic literacies models are perceived as embedded in deeper epistemological and institutional contexts. More specifically, the study skills approach emphasizes the mechanical aspect of language such as grammar and spelling and the importance of teaching such skills

outside any particular context. A key criticism of this model is that it has not addressed the needs and expectations of a diverse student population and the contexts they bring to learning how to read and write, leading some researchers to explore the view that the learning of academic writing is a process of academic socialization that involves more than the acquisition of an independently existing set of skills. In the academic socialization model, the focus is placed on the negotiation of meaning and students' enculturation into new discourses and discourse practices, so that literacy acquisition is viewed within the particular context in which it occurs.

However, according to Lea and Street (2000), the academic socialization approach tends to treat the academy as a "homogenous culture whose norms and practices have simply to be learnt to provide access to the whole institution" (p.35). Given the increasingly diverse students population in American higher education today, this model is thus deemed by some to be problematic and insufficient to address the diverse nature of students and academia itself. In their studies of academic literacies, Lea and Street (2000) found that students who enter the world of higher education often face conflicts and struggles while attempting to accommodate the various discourse needs of academic institutions and discourse communities. In their view, it is not only the English language learners or "non-traditional" students who have difficulties in acquiring the literacy skills of academia; rather, all students face difficulties when they enter university and begin to learn new sets of literacy practices. Thus, the academic literacies model, as Street (2005) emphasizes, "targets the institutions themselves and the professional development of tutors as well as the students' 'needs' for academic support, and it stresses the need for unpacking and making explicit what is taken for granted in terms of literacy requirement"(p.6). In this way, it takes a broader view of students' academic enculturation than does the academic socialization

model. While academic socialization is more related to students' assimilation into the school practices, academic literacies is related to taking up and adapting the literacy practices.

In this section, I have discussed the social view of literacy, particularly focusing on the research and theory produced under the umbrella of the "New Literacy Studies." In it, I have presented the major underpinnings of a social view of literacy: literacy as process, situated literacies and academic literacies, which serve important reference points for this dissertation. I built this study on the research conducted under the aegis of the New Literacy Studies and located it within the social view of literacy, as this approach is mainly concerned with diverse individuals and how they socialize into the mainstream communities. The next section of this literature review will focus specifically on second language (L2) academic literacies. It will focus on research and theory concerning how L2 university students become literate users of the disciplinary discourses of their chosen academic communities.

Second Language Academic Literacies

Along with the previously cited language socialization studies of multilingual students, researchers have also explored the academic literacies of international undergraduate and graduate students in a wide range of disciplines, focusing on both the oral (i.e. presentations) and written literacy (e.g. academic papers) discourse socialization/acquisition of these students (e.g. Ivanic, 1998; Leki, 2003; Prior, 1998). These studies on academic literacies have revealed that becoming literate within second or target language academic communities is a complex and a slow-paced process involving a wide range of linguistic, cultural and social struggles.

Most of the research in second language academic literacies has employed in-depth qualitative research methodologies, which have contributed significantly to our understanding of the academic literacy learning and socialization of English as Second Language (ESL) students

in different disciplines. The methodologies used in these studies have included case studies and multiple case studies (e.g. Casanave, 1995, 2002; Leki, 2003; Spack, 1997/2004). For example, Spack's (1997/ 2004) longitudinal case study of ESL students' academic development shed light on the cultural and linguistic factors that impacted her acquisition of L2 academic literacy. In this longitudinal study, Spack investigated a Japanese student's (Yuko) academic literacy development over a period of three years. Spack's study revealed that Yuko developed various reading strategies for different reading purposes by showing the evolving strategies she used over the course of three years. In terms of writing, Spack found that Yuko attributed her writing struggles to the influence of writing habits in her first language, Japanese, and the kind of education that she received in Japan. Yuko's interview accounts illustrate that she "could not cross over comfortably to the American style of writing and thinking" (p.21), and she was struggling to be critical and independent in her thinking. This struggle of "crossing over" that Spack mentions prevented Yuko from becoming a part of the classroom culture she entered. The following quote captures what Yuko faced while not only learning how to be literate in a second language but also learning how to be a legitimate participant within an academic classroom:

There is a big cultural difference between the U.S and Japan, in the way of communication: in Japan you don't have to say everything you think or feel because certain things are "understood" or even "to be observed." If you express your thoughts all the time, it could be seen as selfish or insistent. But then here in the States no thoughts or feelings exist unless you express them. Being reserved is not something respectable. And I had hard time making myself speak up, and sometimes I feel that I am being too superficial to say everything I feel or think. (p.21)

In addition to the cultural differences in communication that she encountered, Yuko's lack of background knowledge was revealed as another important barrier that affected her academic literacy development. Over time, Yuko overcame various fears that she harbored about reading and writing in her chosen disciplinary field.

Overall, this study adds richness to what we know about multilingual students' literacy experiences. Spack's study reminds us that academic literacy learning for ESL students involves multiple layers of linguistic and cultural concerns. The main point that Spack makes in this study is that rather than creating cultural dichotomies between students' literacy learning and students' culture, it is important to move beyond them and see how students are accepting or resisting certain discourse practices.

Along the same lines, Casanave (2002) also raised some important questions about the complexity of academic literacy and emphasizes that it is a social process that includes "extralinguistic complexities of students' lives" (p.33) and the sociocultural contexts in which they perform their academic literacies, just like we have seen with the experiences of ESL students like Yuko. One of the commonalities of these studies is that the students' learning of academic literacies transcends the issues of grammar, mechanics and spelling (i. e, the autonomous model of literacy) and includes a painstaking process that involves the complexities of academic literacy participation as a sociocultural act.

Second Language Academic Literacies at the Graduate Level

Multilingual students engaging in academic discourses at the graduate level constitute a unique population, as they need to "adapt smoothly to the linguistic and social milieu of their host environment and to the culture of their academic departments and institutions" (Braine, 2002, p. 60) while they shuttle between their home language and culture and the standard academic language and culture they are expected to use as graduate students. The research on graduate students' educational and disciplinary academic socialization has explored such issues as acquisition of genre (e.g., Belcher & Hirvela, 2005; Tardy 2006), voice and identity (e.g.,

Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanic & Camps, 2001), and interactions with experts and mentors (e.g., Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1995).

Several of these studies have emphasized the importance of interaction between peers and mentors, which is considered a significant aspect of academic socialization at the graduate level. For instance, Belcher (1994) investigated the role that the graduate student-advisor relationship plays in multilingual students' participation in research communities while writing their dissertations. In this study, Belcher focuses on the academic relationships between three students and their mentors from the fields of Chinese literature, applied mathematics, and human nutrition. Two (Li and Kuo) of the three students' relationships with their advisors ended up being troubled due to a mismatch between the students' and their advisers' views of academic community, the goal of research writing, and the expectations of readers. On the other hand, the Korean (Keoungmee) student's interaction with her mentor was relatively successful due to their collaborative relationship. As Belcher notes, "the collaborative relationship such as Keoungmee's with her advisor offers a means of helping students become risk takers by giving them an insiders' appreciation of both the reasons and the rewards for writing up research" (p.32).

Another study that echoes Belcher's (1994) results about the collaborative relationships in graduate school was conducted by Li (2005). Although Li's study on disciplinary enculturation took place in a non-Anglophone context, the results of this study closely coincide with the ones conducted in the U.S. setting. In her study, Li (2005) investigated the disciplinary enculturation of a Chinese doctoral student (Fei) in the field of physics at a Chinese university. Li conducted a case study on Fei's experiences with publishing, more specifically how he learned how to display rhetorical structures that eventually led him to successfully enculturate

into his discipline. Yi's study found that Fei's relationship with his mentor played an important role in his success.

Unlike Fei in Li's (2005) study, who willingly accepted the role of a student and recognized the superiority of his mentor, Virginia, a 22 year old (bilingual) from Puerto Rica featured in Casanave's (2002) research, had difficulty in adapting to the institutional culture of her program in the sociology department of an American university. As Casanave points out, Virginia experienced a "clash of cultures" with her program and with her mentors which led her to eventually drop out of the graduate program. The reasons for her leaving the program included language concerns, her "increasing discomfort at imagining herself playing a contributing role" (p.169), her environment outside academia, and her dislike in aligning herself with the academics. Casanave's study revealed that Virginia's socialization into her academic community was partial. She was uncomfortable with her identity as a graduate student. Virginia's nonparticipation in the academic activities of her disciplinary field and the disconnection between her interests and the academia led her to leave her program. On the other hand, her decision to drop out of the program and her new profession showed her increasing sense of agency. As Casanave points out, in her new profession as a family counselor, Virginia seemed to be confident and "very good at this new and serious game and to have finally found a professional home" (p.173).

Some studies have taken a different approach by exploring graduate students' academic literacies with respect to the issues of voice and identity (e.g., Casanave, 1995; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Hyland, 2002). These studies have examined the role of identity in a larger framework as it plays out in acquiring second language academic skills in academic research communities. For example, Hirvela and Belcher (2001) conducted three case studies (Fernando,

Jacinta and Carmen) to explore the role of voice in L2 writing and the identity-related issues multilingual graduate students experience with English academic writing. The participants in this study were three Latin American graduate students who were already established writers in their professions, and in their native languages, when they entered the academic community in the U.S. setting. The study found that two of the participants resisted certain academic writing requirements in English because they clashed with their L1 writing experiences but eventually created hybrid voices and identities as they continued through their doctoral study.

Finally, a series of important and recent research studies which specifically investigate the experiences of graduate student's academic literacy practices and academic socialization are collected in Casanave and Li's (2008) *Learning the literacy practices of Graduate School: Insiders' reflections on academic enculturation*. This book features invaluable research that sheds light on a wide range of issues regarding multilingual students' academic literacy development and disciplinary enculturation in the context of graduate school. Some of the issues discussed in these books involve issues such as mentors and mentee's relationships (e.g. Hirvela & Yi, 2008; Simpson & Matsuda, 2008), active participation in academic communities (Hedgecock, 2008) and situated learning experiences in graduate school (Prior & Min, 2008). One common finding of these studies is that successful academic socialization necessitates proactive participation in various academic communities, negotiation of literacy practices, and active interactions with peers, mentors, and professors. The studies reveal that multilingual students, as they socialize into academic communities in graduate school, "transform the communities by critically and consciously resisting and changing the existing ways of doing things, and more often, by simply being who they are, by bringing their ways of living and coping into the mix" (Casanave & Li, 2008, p.6). Another point of convergence is that in order

for multilingual students to integrate themselves into their discipline, they need to successfully navigate the cultural, linguistic and political practices of English dominant graduate schools in the U.S. This understanding of academic socialization has also shaped the research questions and the analysis of this study. For example, in the findings chapters (4-6), I show how the students attempt to navigate and make sense of the academic literacy practices in the marketing class (chapter 4), the business ethics class (chapter 5) and in the peer study group (chapter 6). Each chapter depicts ways the students critically “change the existing ways of doing things”(Casanave & Li, 2008, p. 6) by questioning certain ideologies invoked in the learning of a subject matter (e.g., teacher-sanctioned notions of ethics in the ethics course), and at times appropriating resources they find meaningful (i.e. core course field knowledge and skills) in other learning contexts (e.g., peer study groups) as they individually and collectively negotiate what it means to be “academically successful” students in various learning spaces of the MBA program.

As the forthcoming chapters will show, the notion of academic success is a reoccurring theme in the students’ socialization experience. To get a better understanding of this notion, I also consider the macro perspective that may inform this notion. That is, I specifically examine the Korean discourse on English education and how it relates to the discourse of academic success for the focal participants in this study.

Beyond English: The Successful Korean

As a country where English is used as a foreign language, South Korea has become one of the largest consumers of English education with a market estimated at over 10 billion dollars a year (“Private language schools hail new English education scheme,” 2011). This English frenzy of South Koreans has even led to recent claims that Korea is increasingly heading towards a sociolinguistic transformation from Korean monolingualism to a developing Korean-English

bilingualism (Lee, 2006). While such extreme claims may yet be contestable, it is still undeniable that English maintains a privileged status in Korea.

The language ideology behind the value of English in Korea is that rather than for actual, everyday use, English in Korea is consumed as a symbolic measure of one's competence and is associated with both academic and job success, social mobility, and international competitiveness (Koo, 2007; Yim, 2007). English proficiency is crucial to obtaining admission to elite schools and highly-desired jobs in Korean corporations like Samsung and Hyundai ("Yengeka kwuklyekita," 2010), even if English, in fact, may never be used upon entrance. However, in my particular study of five Korean students, English as a cultural capital experienced some devaluation as field knowledge and expertise took precedence over one's linguistic abilities (e.g. English).

There are similar studies that address the increasing devaluation of English by Korean students studying overseas. For example, Shin (2012) looked at Korean study-abroad students attending high school in Toronto. In the Canadian context, these students experienced devaluation of their linguistic capital of English, even though before arriving in Canada they had studied abroad in New Zealand and thus had reasonable competence in the language. Attributing this devaluation to the exclusionary tendency of French-speaking Canadians and long-term established Korean immigrants, these short-term study abroad Korean students attempted to counter the attitude by highlighting the "global" nature of the other linguistic capital they had: their competence in Korean. Shin showed how they drew on the international popularity of Korean pop culture, Korea's technological advancement over Canada, using these signs to construct their competence in Korean as "cool" and framing local Canadians and Korean-Canadians as "backwards."

Shin's example shows how the learners' work of negotiating the value of their linguistic capital is shaped by their own socialized anticipations about what is possible and appropriate in the given local context. Similarly in my research, the linguistic capital of English among the focal Korean students is devalued (but not for patriotic reasons). In their view, blind adherence to American and British English has become devalued, particularly in the Korean business context in which field knowledge and expertise appear to take precedence over native-like English competence (Sungjoo, Shinpill interview, August 21, 2012). In one interview, I asked Sungjoo, Joonsung and Shinpill their thoughts about the value of English as a form of capital in their academic careers, and the role it played in their professional goals. Sungjoo started off by narrating an example of how one of his Korean co-workers in a Korean company lagged behind in field knowledge and skills after returning from his MBA graduate studies overseas. Sungjoo claimed that his friend's fluency in speaking English could not compensate for his limited field knowledge when compared with his Korean co-workers.

Sungjoo: When he came back I think everyone expected that he had something to offer the company--you know our company sponsored him with all expenses paid. But it was a disappointment because not only did his co-workers still have better skills than him, but his English, which was better than before, was not enough to make up for his mediocre field knowledge. His Korean co-workers had already advanced in their skills while he was away.

Shinpill: You mean, all he was good at was speaking English? better than his co-workers?

Researcher: Isn't that a skill too? I mean English. You said he was pretty good.

Sungjoo: Well not good enough. English is a skill, but everyone these days is good in English. It's overrated. I think companies in Korea are realizing that English isn't enough anymore. You have to have it all--the skills, the knowledge--and if you are a native English speaker even better. So in reality when I go back to Korea they are going to expect to see if I have learned any new skills or knowledge other than just the language[. . .]. (Group interview, translated into English, September 20, 2012)

Sungjoo's response also illustrates the idea that the promise of English--the belief that by learning English and becoming more native like one can escape poverty and achieve economic success--in this sense appears to be a false one (Pennycook, 2007). The problem, according to Park and Wee (2012), is that the image of the entrepreneurially successful self leads many to believe that if one has access to English, that that will serve as capital and allow one to fully develop one's untapped potential, one will become a well-adapted person in their respected field (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 161). Park and Wee (2012) believe there is a need to demystify the false promise of English. Sungjoo's response to the devaluation of English reflects a glimpse into this need.

Sungjoo's response to the value of knowledge over linguistic competence does little to challenge the dominant ideology of the English native speaker as having greater authority in the linguistic market and in Korean academia. In reality, in the forthcoming chapters (e.g., chapter 4), three focal Korean students, Sungjoo, Shinpill, and Joonsung, indirectly participate in sanctioning the authority of the native speaker (e.g. marketing instructor) as they use the native speaker's authority to mediate their own (authoritative) position as "model international" students among their peers. What's more, the native speaker is not any native speaker, but one who is also represented as having a distinct knowledge in their given field of study (marketing professor). Thus, as we will see in chapter 4, the Korean students' reference to an intellectually

competent person includes one's English proficiency, but more importantly it presumes a relatively high degree of field knowledge/expertise. This is not to deny that native-like English proficiency has value for the focal students in this study. What is significant is that the focal students involved in this study are different because they come from backgrounds where English is not their native language, and second, the kinds of communicative purposes involved are also different, because English is being used for more instrumental or "practical" purposes, that is, to facilitate the transfer of information and knowledge rather than, say, as a symbol of cultural capital or even to some extent cultural affiliation.

In sum, the focal Korean students' responses to group work, class discussions and written assignments indicate a unique trajectory whereby the main goal is to gain field knowledge and eventually seek jobs in their home country (except for Joonsung). The important point here is that their cultural ideology of English and "academic success" may inform the tension between valued knowledge and English competency in the local academic literacy practices in this study.

As we will see in the remaining chapters, the ideological meaning of English is not something that is carried out mechanically through fixed formulae, but rather is constituted in the social action and interaction among a particular group of people in a specific context. Awareness of this fact brings us closer to a better understanding of the increasing devaluation of English and focus on field knowledge and skills among the focal students in this study. While Korea's discourse on English education may not fully account for the students' interpretation of their local academic literacy experiences in the U.S, it represents one possible ideological framework that may shed light on the focal Korean students' understanding of academic success as they socialize into the program.

Chapter Summary

The review of literature on various theories of socialization (e.g. L1 and L2 socialization, academic socialization), academic literacies of second language speakers, and the brief overview of the Korean sociocultural discourse on English education illustrates the complex and multidimensional nature of the academic literacy socialization experiences of ESL students from a specific linguistic and cultural background that is different from that of the U.S. institution. To fully understand the academic literacy socialization processes of multilingual students and how they resist or adapt to new academic environments requires an understanding of their social interactions, as much of their activity at the graduate level occurs in connection with others, not in isolation. Likewise, it is important for researchers to look at relevant academic literacy events both inside and outside of the classroom that occur in different spaces and timescales that may influence the students' current socialization process. Moreover, investigation of the dialogues they engage about their current academic socialization is not confined to what takes place in the classrooms. Therefore, focusing on the interdiscursive nature of their socialization process as an analytic tool, as will be further explained in chapter 4, provides a deeper understanding of the focal students' academic literacy socialization during their first two academic quarter. On our way to the findings chapter, I first discuss the context and the design of the study in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Studying the Discourse of the MBA program: People, Place and Meanings

Methods

Introduction

It's September 11, 2012 and Sungjoo, Jaemin, and Marta have arrived early for their study group meeting. The three are discussing the instructor's feedback from both their marketing memo analysis and their business ethics case analysis assignment. Two of the focal Korean students, Sungjoo and Jaemin, are comparing their grades with each other as their American peer, Marta, observes this scene.

Sungjoo: Why are we taking this course [Business ethics course]? There's no answer to any of the scenarios. I got 11 out of 15. Look (points to the grading criteria) I did everything she ask.

Marta: (Looks at Sungjoo's ethics assignment feedback) Well, I think she wants us to explore the different possibilities to those issues, but you need to use each question from the framework in your analysis.

Sungjoo: I don't think she agree[s] with me. I kind of, you know, can't catch what she expect[s]. This is [an] unpractical class.

Jaemin: (Sees Sungjoo's marketing memo assignment grade). You got 13.5. Can I see it? (Sungjoo hands his memo assignment to Jaemin). I think the action plan is confusing for Mountain Brew. There is too many action plans to talk about in one paragraph.

Sungjoo: See. It's easier if you focus on only [a] few. You have to think about best marketing plan for it. Be more practical (points to Jaemin's marketing assignment) and

back it with evidence. (Sungjoo pauses and sits back on his chair) But, I think it is more useful course than ethics. We can't take ethics skill and apply it because it's not a skill.

Jaemin: Don't think too much [in ethics course]. Just find out what the professor wants and write it. You need the grade to pass. It's already not a good situation that she thinks some of us are cheating because of Ray⁴. At least you are doing well in marketing, so don't try to ruin it.

Sungjoo: (Smiles). So, maybe now we are all cheating? (squints). I don't understand why it is big issue. It's sharing information together [. . .]

(Sungjoo, Jaemin and Marta; hallway conversation, September, 27, 2012)

Listening to a group of Korean students' opinions about the courses and grades in these situated contexts not only serves as the opening routine of a typical peer group discussion, but also reflects the ways in which a group of Korean students can be interdiscursively categorized and labeled by an instructor in a particular way based on a prior academic literacy event. For example, the informal conversation above illustrates how, according to Jaemin, Sungjoo may be perceived as a "good"⁵ student in the marketing course; yet, may not be positioned that way in the ethics course by virtue of his ethnic association to a fellow Korean, Ray, who was guilty of cheating on an assignment in another course. While the cheating event took place in a different academic space (the accounting class) and different time (cheating event occurred weeks before), the nature of the event positioned Korean students as potential "cheaters." While there have been students accused as "cheating" in their assignments in the past, during my research in the

⁴ Ray, a Korean student was found guilty of copying answers on the internet for one of his Finance group assignments. This cheating incident became known among faculty members, and the nature of this event was used as an example case study in the ethic course anonymously.

⁵ I define "good" student similarly to the notion of the "model international" student. That is, a student who is studious, has a distinct field knowledge and gets along with other students and instructors in the program.

program this particular event was appropriated in the ethics course by the instructor as an ethical dilemma case study.

As I will show in the forthcoming findings chapters, the interdiscursive nature of academic literacy events that occurred in different spaces and times become linked to here-and-now literacy events in the ethics and marketing class. Reference to such past events provides evidence of the specific features of a student's identity and the meaning of "success" in each classroom. By comparing the marketing and ethics instructors' references to specific past academic literacy events as they categorize and label a group of Korean students, I show how the students are perceived as "ethically questionable" in the ethics classroom, yet are represented as "model international" students in the marketing class. Because the peer study groups were established by the MBA program as a means for students to discuss group projects for core courses such as the marketing class, I further show how the image of the "model international" student becomes recursively appropriated in these peer study groups. In making the comparison between the two courses, I examine the focal students' multiple identities and their definition of academic success, which are interdiscursively produced through the different literacy events within the MBA program.

The qualitative approach I have chosen enables me to understand the multiple identities constructed in different academic literacy practices, and to examine the interplay of power relations in the context of the two courses and multiple peer group settings. In doing so, I choose not to view the focal students' socialization processes as simply an assimilation into the target academic community. Rather, the forthcoming chapters will demonstrate the dynamic nature of the meaning-making processes of each focal participant in relation with others, including peers, instructors, and me (as a researcher) within the larger interdiscursive context of the academic

literacy practices in the various academic sites (ethics classroom, marketing classroom, and the peer study group). In their groups, the students are free to challenge and negotiate distinctions among themselves, the course and other peer group members. They also construct boundaries, associate themselves with or build similarities with others. This chapter presents the methodological approach that undergirds my understanding of the complex nature of the focal students' academic literacy practices and identity construction. First, I discuss the inception of this project and the context of the MBA program as I explain the rationale for choosing the three literacy sites, the marketing class, ethics class and the peer study groups, in my study. Then, I illustrate the discourse of the ethics and marketing courses to explain how the subject matter of each course and the instructor's teaching practices inform students' understanding of their academic literacy practices in their classrooms and peer study groups as the students attempt to define what it means to be "successful" in each context. Following the contextual discussion is the design of the study. I will briefly introduce the academic literacy sites, the participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis, and a discussion of how I negotiated my role as a researcher.

Academic Literacy and the ESL Class: How it Began

One of my first teaching experiences at this university was in the ESL service courses as a teaching assistant for a group of international students. I was introduced to this position in 2009 through a Korean colleague who was then working for the ESL service courses. Through my colleague, I made initial contact with the director of the ESL program and was interviewed for a teaching position to teach one of the many ESL academic writing courses⁶. In the fall of 2009, I

⁶ Foreign students (both undergraduate and graduate students) who didn't meet the university's English placement test score cutline were required to take an ESL academic writing class. Students who took the ESL courses were from various disciplines that ranged from Engineering to Business.

was part of a cohort of over forty ESL teaching assistants who were hired to teach basic to intermediate academic writing for incoming international students. Our group included a handful of Asian ESL teaching assistants who preferred to teach undergraduate students because of their fear of teaching “older” graduate ESL students. Then there were the native English speakers who had teaching experience in other countries and were eager to apply their pedagogical theories in their teaching. Despite their apparent diversity, these people taught me that teaching was also about understanding who the students were and the kind of field-specific knowledge they were appropriating in their ESL class activities.

Student teaching was a lonely and painful adjustment to the realities of contemporary bureaucratic education. In the fall of 2011, I was assigned by the new program director to teach a group of MBA ESL students because the director believed that I was in good standing to teach a new class based on the positive evaluation completed by my past ESL students. However, having neither background in business writing and speaking nor any information about the MBA program and its ESL students, I scrounged the internet, the library and the ESL program’s lesson plans for materials to teach for the first day of my ESL class. The first week, I attempted to teach students how to write a business memo. I started to wish that I was invisible in the class. As far as I could tell, everyone in the class seemed bored, and half the students were doing other assignments.

The next week, I decided to ask students to fill out an informal needs analysis sheet that asked what they wanted to learn from this class. It also asked students to describe the kinds of assignments they struggled with in their MBA courses. These questions were a means for me to get a better idea of what they needed in terms of academic writing and presentation skills. After reading the needs analysis, I came up with the idea that borrowing student writing assignments

from their business courses would be a good starting point to build new writing activities for the ESL class. I was also overly excited about the possibility of (re)making a new ESL syllabus specifically for this group of MBA students.

However, despite the anticipated struggles in my first teaching experience, I fared better than I would have expected. In one of the lesson plans, I was asked to do a business negotiation lesson in which students were paired up to practice role play in a given business scenario. The purpose of the lesson was to provide students the space to practice commonly used negotiation phrases in English. Students did amazingly well as they talked endlessly with their partners, but they resisted any attempt (especially by a newcomer) to expand applying these new phrases beyond the boundary of the ESL class. Slowly, I felt we were getting somewhere. But one day, as we were discussing different classroom cultures about starting, maintaining and ending class discussions, I asked students to brainstorm a list of commonly used English phrases; they included phrases such as, '*What do you think about...*,' and '*In my opinion...*.' The next morning one of my Korean students came to me before class and said, "You know, I'm going to be honest with you. Even if we learn about these phrases, we [will] never be good like the native speakers. We will always get points off for our communication issue, so we rely on other things to make up for low scores on our English. So, you don't have to try very hard to teach us, but we'll give you good evaluations, don't worry. . ." (informal conversation, MBA Korean student, Narae, September 10, 2012). So if their focus was not going to be English, I wanted to find out further what these students were learning in their MBA courses. I wanted to understand the Korean students' particular academic literacy practices in the MBA program and how they situated themselves and were situated as L2 students.

The turning point for me, however, came when I was given the opportunity to work as an ESL research assistant to improve the ESL MBA curriculum. I met with staff members from the university's English Institute program to get a better idea of their partnership with the MBA program. With the help of the Korean students in my class, I was also able to interview MBA instructors on their teaching philosophy, attend MBA faculty meetings (as a researcher), and to meet with other Korean students in the MBA courses. As I continued my research, I learned that the MBA marketing and ethics courses were two of the MBA courses in which Korean students had a hard time grasping the instructor's grading expectations and standards. As one of the Korean participants, Jaemin, informed me: "I speak out in class as best as I can, and I try to do my best in all the assignments and submit them on time. I'm not sure what else I'm supposed to do. I don't think my Engineering background is of much help" [영어 한 마디라도 할려고 노력하거든요... 숙제도 신경 좀 써서 내려고 하고... 이런 피드백을 받을 때 마다 제가 더 이상 할 수 있는게 없네요. 제 전공이 공대라 별 도움이 안되는 것 같기도 ...] (informal conversation, marketing class, September 11, 2012). While other international students had similar responses, I knew from this particular response that I needed to look further into how the Koreans made meaning of their membership in the MBA community along the lines of academic literacy, language competency and identity. I chose to continue my research in Korean students' socialization processes, with an eye towards doing fieldwork in the business ethics and marketing course.

I relate these details because I think it's important for readers to understand my approach to the topic. I take seriously the dictum that every view is a view from somewhere--even if the viewer refuses to recognize his/her positionality or claims to have eliminated it through the

application of some scientific research method (which itself has a very particular history and purpose). In this spirit, I turn now to the context of the MBA program with particular focus on the course schedule and rationale for choosing the three academic literacy sites for this study. Then, I illustrate in detail the discourses of the ethics and marketing course to explore how the course curriculum and the instructor's teaching practices inform their notion of academic success.

Context of Academic Socialization

The MBA program in this study is situated in a small urban area in the U.S. and is well-known for its growing foreign student population, particularly Asian students, among other MBA programs in its state. While the MBA program in this small urban area may not be a top tier program compared to other MBA programs (e.g. Harvard, Stanford MBA programs)⁷ in the States, it is well-known among foreign students because it is situated in a large public university that has one of the largest population of international students in the U.S. This may explain the large number of foreign students in the program.

Typical of many MBA programs in the U.S., the MBA program in this project consists of a professional (part-time), executive, and full-time program. The professional MBA program has a set curriculum in which students complete courses over the two-and-a-half years and meet only twice a week for classes. The executive program consists of professionals who have substantial work experience (at least 10 years) prior to enrolling in the program. In my study, I follow students in the full-time MBA program, which is traditionally designed for students in their

⁷ Top tier MBA programs (e.g. Harvard/Stanford) do not have such large number of international students compared to the MBA program in this study. There may be several reasons for the large international student population in this university. One reason I speculate has much to do with the reputation this university has for its Engineering program, which is ranked in the top 5 in the U.S. This reputation may have contributed to international students' interest and growing population in this university.

earlier stages of their careers and usually have minimal work experience (0-3.5 years). Compared to the professional and executive program, the full-time program usually has a larger number of foreign students (<http://www.ptmba.illinois.edu>).

Table 3.1

MBA Program 2014 Class Profile and Demographics

Women	26%
Minority (% of domestic students)	34%
Minority (% of total class)	19%
International ⁸	44%
Mean age	27
Mean years of work experience	51 months
Mean Grade Point	3.2/4.0
Mean GMAT	666
Class size	119

Note. Retrieved from <http://www.mba.illinois.edu/profiles/archive.aspx>

Since the program has a large population of foreign students, and because I had connections to Korean students through my own ESL class, I had the benefits of professional and student contacts. The marketing instructor was particularly interested in my project and allowed me to introduce my research project and formally recruit Korean participants through his class. Among the five male Korean participants I recruited one was a bi-racial Korean-American student who was a native speaker. I believed his perspective as an American, yet as an individual positioned on the border of two cultures would be informative in understanding the four Korean participants' academic literacy experiences. I also believed his close interaction with the Korean students would provide a unique perspective on the Korean students' positioning.

As I observed the the marketing and ethics classes and conducted in-depth interviews with the five participants about their class discussions, activities and assignments, I was also

⁸ Among 44% of international students in the MBA program (2012), eight were Korean (6 male and 2 female).

invited to join their peer study groups which met sporadically two to three times a week to discuss group projects. I spent a good deal of time visiting these peer study groups throughout the eight months, observing literacy practices in these small-group settings. The peer group settings outside the classroom space eventually became my third literacy site. By the time the project ended in March of 2013, three of the focal participants had found internship positions in the States, and meeting face-to-face became more difficult thereafter.

Given the dynamic social interaction that I noticed in the peer study groups, plus the hierarchical nature of the study group dynamics, I decided to focus most of my attention on these group meetings. The group discussions of core course assignments coupled with everyday talk about their experiences in the MBA program served as a starting point for a qualitative study of the focal students and their interaction with other peers. I spent a lot of time “hanging out” with the peer groups in the business building, at a nearby café, and in their homes. This gave me opportunities to examine literacy practices and educational ideologies outside the classroom. It also helped me establish a more trusting relationship with the students and enabled me to build some strong and valuable friendships.

Over the course of eight months in the MBA program, I conducted in-depth interviews with fifteen MBA students from different cultural backgrounds who had built some relationship to the focal students in this study. I also interviewed three MBA instructors, the Dean of the program, the MBA coordinator, the university writing center director, and three MBA staff members. My decision to choose certain informants as secondary participants for interviews came mostly from listening to the peer group informal conversations as students talked about the political landscape of the MBA program and the two courses of this study. In short, this dissertation compares the academic literacy practices of the ethics and marketing course, but also

includes an in-depth examination of the academic literacy practices of the peer study groups situated beyond the classroom space.

The MBA program: Courses, Peer Study Groups, and People

The MBA program in this study has a reputation for an emphasis on student diversity with almost 20 percent of its 119 students coming from foreign countries. The program's educational philosophy emphasizes experiential learning. According to an interview with the Dean of the Business College, experiential learning goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom and includes real-life opportunities, such as opportunities for students to participate in global consulting projects, national case competitions, and entrepreneurial leadership programs (Interview notes, September 19, 2012).

Learning in the classroom also includes group work. Students are pre-assigned to study groups with five to six students in each group in the first academic quarter. The main goals of these groups are twofold. First, as part of the core courses' curriculum students submit a group project, which constitutes 30 % of their final grade in each core course. Students are thus assigned to study groups to accommodate the group assignments. Second, the study groups provide students the opportunity to interact with and learn with peers from diverse cultural and work backgrounds. The program coordinator further elaborates on this:

We manage to place them with students from different backgrounds, so that students from similar backgrounds are not in the same group [. . .] It also makes the transition into the program easier if we assign them into groups in the first quarter. . . In the second quarter, as they settle in, we let them choose groups [. . .]. (MBA program coordinator, September 20, 2012)

It is here in the peer study groups that the politics of students' identities is seen and in which issues of power come to be linked to certain forms of cultural capital. As students integrate into the program during the first two academic quarters, primarily through their peer group and

classroom activities, they undergo the most intense period of course assignments and group projects (MBA program coordinator, September 20, 2012).

Students in this program had to enroll in four to five program-specific required courses each quarter, which results in a total of nine core courses for the first six months (first two quarters) of the program. After the first six months, in addition to program-specified courses, students are allowed to take elective courses which focus on different research fields suggested by the program. As I interviewed three of the focal students about their core courses in the first quarter, they noted that the business ethics and leadership course were the two most challenging classes because they had heard rumors from their Korean seniors that it was “hard to get good grades” [얼기 쉽지 않은 수업이라고 하더라구요] (Joonsung, Sungjoo, and Shinpill July 28, 2012). More specifically, Sungjoo added that he heard it was difficult to “figure out” the instructor’s expectations in the written assignments and projects making it even more difficult to adjust to the course workload (Informal conversation, Sungjoo, July 28, 2012)

Table 3.2

MBA Students Course Schedule (focused classroom sites are in bold)

Courses	Schedule
1. Critical thinking/writing course	Summer term (July ~ August)
2. Pronunciation course	
3. Reading course	
4. Marketing I	Fall term (August ~ mid-October)
5. Business ethics and leadership	
6. Economics	
7. Accounting	
8. Data Analysis	
9. ESL Business Communication	
10. Marketing II	Fall term (mid-October ~ December)
11. Business ethics and leadership	
11. Professional Communication	
12. Organizational Leadership course	
13. Finance	
14. ESL Business Communication	

Discourse of the Marketing Course. The marketing course is one of the core courses for all incoming MBA students in the first and second academic quarters. To accommodate the 119 first year MBA students in the business building classroom, the course is divided into two sections (A and B). Each section meets twice a week for two quarters. The course is designed to cover general marketing management principles, and students apply them in a variety of realistic business problems (i.e. business case studies from *Harvard Business Review*). On the first day of class the marketing professor outlines the specific goals of the course as follows:

First, we will learn terminology, institutions, and programs of modern marketing from different cultural marketing perspectives. Second, we consider the strategic analysis of marketing opportunities and communication of marketing decisions practiced in case analysis. Finally, the course prepares you for in-depth analysis needed in the simulation exercises you'll be required to do in the Marketing component of that project [. . .].
(classroom observation notes, August 20, 2012)

As Dr. Johnson, the marketing professor, reads aloud the details of the course objectives he notes that many of the course readings would be available online for purchase, the majority of which would be business case studies from *Harvard Business Review* (see Appendix A). He also notes that group discussions of the individual case study assignments are permitted, but he cautions students about using additional data or outside information in the case memo write-ups: "it will be considered a breach of the honor code if you use previous write-ups to aid you. And yes, this also includes information from the internet. . ." (observation notes, August, 20, 2012)

With permission from the instructor, I gained access to a hard copy of the course readings and case study packet. I read through the introduction section of the course packet, which notes all the assignments required in the course. The introduction specifically requires students to study the theories from the readings, and come to class prepared to discuss them in relation to each week's case study. There were also weekly in-class pop quizzes, weekly online lectures and

questions, and the pharmaSim project in which students use simulation software to simulate a marketing strategy for a given product. Students were required to explain the marketing strategy they would follow as well as the rationale for their decisions. The PharmaSim marketing simulation project is worth 130 points towards their final grade (out of 300).

The most interesting part of the course packet is the preface. The preface makes it clear that the learning and teaching of marketing theories and concepts is structuralist in its methodology, that is, the teacher delivers *status quo* content via some method such as lecturing or demonstrating, and students are required to memorize the information and the terminologies presented (Petrina, 2012). For example, the preface emphasizes that class quizzes on the theories would not be announced before hand and suggested that students take notes during lectures in preparation for the pop quizzes each week. Moreover, students are required to apply these terminologies as they write their recommendation memos in the case study analysis. The preface further notes that failure to apply the theories in the case analysis would result in lost points, and notes that students should review the grading criteria in the rubric.

As Canagarajah (1999) points out, this methodology appears to be deeply tied to behaviourist thinking, assuming that given sufficient practice students can be made to display habit-oriented ‘correct’ responses. In its concern for ‘correctness,’ the course reading packet arrogates to itself the authority in the classroom to arbitrate, evaluate and even define what is acceptable knowledge. From the preface’s structuralist point of view, the fundamentals of marketing theories are considered to be, to some degree, autonomous and even reflecting value-free interpretations. Skimming through the readings and relating them to the preface of the reading packet, I could find little to encourage students to critically explore the terminologies or the the explanations of the marketing theories, models and principles.

Marketing professor's teaching practice and philosophy. Despite the many pop-quizzes and weekly case analysis assignments the focal students complained about, Dr. Johnson was well-liked by students (Joonsung, and Shinpill. Informal conversation, October 15, 2012). One reason for his popularity was that he was truly interested in seeing his students “do well” in the class (Joonsung and Shinpill, informal conversation, October 15, 2012). According to Joonsung, many international students often sought the marketing professor for emotional support when “things got tough” because he was willing to take the time to listen to his students. As Joonsung explained earlier in the academic semester, “He’s [Dr. Johnson] a tough professor, but he tries to give you the benefit of the doubt because he knows that the language issue adds to the extra pressure to complete the assignments [. . .]” [때문에 우리가 고생하고 있다는 사실 잘 알고 있는 것 같아요] (informal conversation, Originally in Korean, translated into English, September 28, 2012). To get Dr. Johnson’s own perspective on his teaching philosophy when it came to addressing international students’ needs he noted:

They will have to learn the hard way --that in order to succeed [in the program] you have to be willing to seek opportunities and sometimes (short pause) learn to ask for help[. . .] I give each student the chance to say something in class, even if it isn’t directly related to the topic [. . .] Now, I’m not like this with the rest of the students [native speaker students], but seeing them [international students] struggle I do give them that extra attention [. . .] the rest is up to them [. . .]. (Interview, September 11, 2012)

Dr. Johnson also notes that applying the terminologies from the course readings to the case studies is challenging for the international students because of their limited contextual knowledge about the case itself (informal interview notes, November 06, 2012). To address this issue, Dr. Johnson often asked students to share their cultural or work experience in connection to the theories. Furthermore, what was also interesting about the marketing professor’s teaching practice was his public recognition of students’ academic talents and achievements in class. A

case in point, Dr. Johnson publically commended three Korean international students, Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo, for ranking in the top three in their marketing simulation projects near the end of the first quarter. Dr. Johnson referred to these international students as “model” students. I refer to them as “model international” students in this study to differentiate them from native English speakers/students in the class. In order to motivate his current international students to “do well” in the class, Dr. Johnson also narrated stories of past successful international students noted for their field-specific expertise. Equally, a few native speaker students were also commended in class, particularly for their high grade point averages.

In sum, the instructor’s characterization of “successful international” students, which emphasizes field specific knowledge and expertise in marketing, reflects a teaching practice that upholds knowledge as a form of cultural capital in the marketing class.

Discourse of the ethics course. The class meets once a week in the campus auditorium where 119 students take the class together. When students enter the auditorium, they sit at one of the 20 roundtables with each table accommodating approximately 5-6 students. On the first day of class, Dr. Kline, the instructor, first explains that most of the class time would be spent applying the suggested ethical framework to problem situations in business (classroom observation notes, August 20, 2012). Reading the course syllabus (see Appendix B), Dr. Kline iterates the importance of building ethical awareness and recognizing the resources students might bring to bear when facing ethical dilemmas. This appears to be the main objective of this course.

Similar to the marketing course, the ethics course also provides a course packet which includes ethics case study situations and articles on theoretical knowledge relevant to the subject

matter of ethics. Each week students submit reflection papers based on each case example by following the ethical decision-making framework.

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1. What issues does the situation present?
 2. What rules and regulations apply?
 3. What questions do you need and want to ask?
 4. What resources are available to you to work through this situation?
 5. What options do you have? Who will be affected by each?
 6. What are you going to do? And what legal issues will you have to consider?
-

Figure 3.1. Ethics decision making framework

As Dr. Kline discusses the details of the weekly assignments, she notes that the final week write-up of one's personal ethical dilemma would be one of the more important assignments for this class. For this assignment students analyze their own challenging ethical experience as either a student or an employee. Application of the ethical framework in addition to the theoretical concepts is required for this assignment as well.

The case studies would become my main textual resource as I observed class discussions for the rest of the two academic quarters. Because the class consisted of students from various cultural and work backgrounds, discussions around the case studies reflected various ideological frameworks of ethics, which also led to intellectual debates among students and the instructor about what was ethical/unethical in particular situations. During these discussions, the instructor took on the role of facilitator, and when tension rose among students the instructor reminded them to stay true to the ethical decision framework (classroom observation note summary, from September 04, 10, 17; October 10, 24; November 14, 2012). While class discussions invited intellectual debate around the different case scenarios, Dr. Kline made a point to remind students that it was also important to cultivate one's moral judgments: "We all have a well-developed

internal ethical standard of some sort, but the point is to learn to develop the external ethical standards through the case studies” (September 12, 2012).

If the instructor’s goal was to help students cultivate ethical awareness using the suggested ethical framework for the case studies, some students believed that the framework was impractical in real-life business situations:

The cases sound real but the approach to the dilemma is too general and not applicable to real situations. Sometimes I think it is too theory driven as well. (Joonsung, focal Korean student, individual interview, September 10, 2012)

[케이스들이 너무 일반적인 내용만 다루고 있는 것 같아요. 그리고 실제 그런 상황이 일어난다면 교수가 원하는 framework 이 정말 쓸모가 있을까요? 잘 모르겠어요. 그리고 이론을 설명을 하실 때...이것이 어디에 써먹을 수 있을지 궁금하기도 하고. . .]

Mandatory classes, such as ethics, is often painstakingly dull and common-sense. Sometimes it feels like lacking application to real-life situation. We’re all from very different backgrounds, so I think it’s important to consider the different cultural and personal perspectives when we approach them [case studies]. I don’t think we get much of that here. (John, native speaker, individual interview, September 10, 2012)

The class reminds me of my high school ethics class. I think there should be more focus on the individual than on the rules. I mean, who is really going to apply those rules when they are in those kinds of situation? (Shinpill, focal Korean student, individual interview, September 10, 2012)

[윤리 수업 같아요. 규칙이나 이론 말고- 개인의 상황과 생각을 더 존중해주는 게 낫다고 생각하거든요. 솔직히 규칙을 그대로 따르는 사람이 몇 명이나 있을까요?]

While the three student responses do not represent the voices of all students in the class, their responses exemplify a common pattern that students appeared to agree with: how applicable was the framework in real-life situations? Some students appeared dismayed that the course was more focused on teaching them what to do rather than seeking to stimulate their moral imagination and defend their sense of moral obligation, and in the process, discover a better

understanding of themselves (Shinpill, Joonsung, and John, Informal conversations, September 04, 10, 17; October 10, 2012)..

Business Ethics professor's teaching practice and philosophy. The business ethics course begins by addressing basic ethical theories, including utilitarianism, Kant's categorical imperative, Rawl's justice and fairness theory, and the ethics of care theory (observation note and course handout, September 12, 2012). The methods and approaches taken to deliver further understanding and application of ethical theory is influenced by the nature of the MBA program, the university institution and more evidently, the instructor's teaching and professional background. I found myself focusing on the instructor's teaching practices and philosophy to give me insight into the discourse of the ethics class. As I observed the instructor's teaching, I noticed that a component of the course was devoted to introducing students to ethical theories and guidelines, which appeared quite structured in her approach to them. For example, at the beginning of each class, the instructor summarized the basic theories and key terminologies for that day's reading, and then the application of the ethical framework for that day's case example would constitute the remainder of the class discussion. When time permitted, near the end of class, students did role-play of characters in the case studies. Dr. Kline believes that role-play will aid students in their own reflection of their ethical beliefs and encourage moral development (interview notes, August 29, 2012).

What is evident thus far in describing each instructor's teaching practices and philosophy is that the instructor's personal and professional experiences, the purpose of the course, and the students' cultural and educational beliefs all inform the discourse of each course. The forthcoming chapters will illustrate how each informs the other in a complex manner. In doing so, I show the different meanings of cultural capital with regard to the forms of valued

knowledge for a group of Korean students. I show how these students may be situated on the periphery in one academic context yet positioned as “smart” “successful” students in another, thereby projecting the instructors,’ the other students’ and the focal students’ ideologies of what it means to be “good/successful” students.

Participant Selection

I initially got acquainted with two of my focal participants through their summer English class at the university’s Intensive English Institute. Other focal student participants were introduced through my ESL students in August as word of mouth spread about my research interest. Through all this informal networking, I was first introduced to Shinpill, Sungjoo, and Joonsung who were interested in my project. These three would become part of the focal group of my study. Through them I was able to make contact with the marketing instructor and other staff members, the MBA coordinator and the ethics instructor.

My focal student participant selection was mainly guided by the following question: a) How did a group of Korean students interpret, negotiate, and make meaning from information presented in the academic literacy practices of the MBA program? Given this purpose, the focal student participants in this study were selected on the basis of their struggles and strong opinions about the MBA program as well as their active engagement in the literacy sites of the study. While including female Korean participants would have enriched this study⁹, the three Korean female students in the program had reservations about being interviewed in this project mainly (according to them) due to their busy schedule during the first two academic quarters. Thus, I was mainly able to include Korean male students who were open to participating in this project.

⁹ I was able to observe two female Korean students, Bona and Mina, when I examined the structure of Korean peer social hierarchy (chapter 6). However, they were not willing to be directly interviewed by me for this project.

Because the academic literacy in this research was also situated in a space in which students from different cultural and ethnic background participated (group and class discussions), I considered other students' perspectives toward academic literacy significant as well as the focal students' participation in these literacies. These perspectives may include their opinions about the focal Korean students' identity in the peer study group and in the classroom as well as their general view of the academic literacy practices that the focal students actively participated in. Next, I discuss in more detail the profile of each focal student and their academic and professional goals in relation to their MBA.

Shinpill: *"It's all about learning the system"* (November 02, 2012)

Shinpill was born and raised in South Korea from an affluent family who manufactured women's clothing for a large clothing company. He attended undergraduate school in Korea, majoring in marketing and minoring in finance. He was also one of the "model international" students in the marketing class, ranking first place in the marketing simulation project (Sungjoo and Joonsung were ranked second and third). He had visited the U.S. for a year as an exchange student in college and frequently visited relatives in the States through his youth. Thus, coming to the U.S. for his MBA degree was not his first exposure to American culture and academia. When I asked his reasons for pursuing an MBA degree in the States, he said:

I need the degree to save face when I return to Korea because I plan to take over my father's company. Most of my father's employees look up to my father and if I don't have the right credentials, the employees will not take me seriously as their new boss. . . If I get an MBA degree in the States, then at least they will know I am serious about my new job. (Interview, August 22, 2012)

[저는 아버지 사업을 이어 받아야 하기 때문에 MBA 학위를 받는게 중요하죠. 아버지 밑에서 오래 동안 일을 해오신 분들이 저를 보면 어떻게 반응을 하실지 잘 모르겠지만, 우선 미국에서 학위를 받아야 어느 정도 신뢰가 생기니까. . . 그리고 외국에서 공부를 했다는 것만이라도 신뢰를 주는 것도 있구요 ...]

Before he began his graduate work in the MBA program, Shinpill had worked in Korea as an associate manager in the marketing department for E-mart (similar to Wal-mart). In one of our earlier interviews, he said, “What struck me was that most of the employees had no knowledge skills in the field of marketing. Some of them didn’t even know how to use Excel when they needed to submit reports on the inventories. This made my adaption process difficult because I had to write up most of the reports.”[아는게 하나도 없어요. 기본 지식이 없다는 거죠. 심지어 Excel 할 수 있는 친구들이 별로 없었어요... 그리고 보고서를 작성하는 방법을 몰라서 제가 거의 다 써서 제출했잖아요. 정말 힘들었어요] (Individual interview, August, 20, 2012). He noted that this experience made him realize that someone needed to voice these fundamental issues with employee training (August 20, 2012). This work-experience motivated him to be more active in voicing his opinions in many group settings in the MBA program (August 20, 2012).

During the first few months into his MBA education, Shinpill established an informal study group of Asian students as a means to collaborate on individual assignments for their core courses. Being an active participant and leader of his group, Shinpill seemed to value the discussions he and his group members had. Especially, he said, the existence of the informal Asian peer group made the “burden of graduate studies less heavy” (Informal interview, October 03, 2012). Overall, Shinpill seemed to remain calm despite the pressure and demands of the assignments required in the first two academic quarters. As he told me one day while walking to the bus stop, “you need to fake it until you make it. The only way to do that is to understand the system here” [연기를 해야되요. 그리고 시스템을 빨리 파악을해야 고생] (Informal conversation, September 11, 2012). This statement struck me as interesting and

reminded me that the pretending that Shinpill thought he was doing was perhaps a conscious act in which he was modeling and imitating certain academic moves to become a part of the academic community he was envisioning.

Sungjoo: *“The intellectual and emotional support glues us together”*

(September 04, 2012)

Sungjoo was one of the brightest students in the group (marketing professor, interview, October 03, 2012). Upon completing his undergraduate studies in Korea with a degree in Finance, he worked as a financial analyst for a Korean bank for the next 7 years before his decision to get an MBA degree. He had extensive experience working in a bank and had much knowledge in finance. As one of the older students in the group, he had several areas of interest besides finance. During the first year of his studies, he took on a business venture project by regularly communicating with Korean investors via email in hopes of starting the business as soon as he received his MBA degree. When I asked him about the purpose of pursuing an MBA degree in the States, he explained in detail that it was a means to “upgrade his skills” and gain more knowledge about marketing management in order to build his new business. He gave me the following account:

I know that as a financial analyst you can only work for a company, but I wanted something more. So, I wanted to set up my own business. I’m still in the process of building it so I can’t tell you the details, but I feel like getting an MBA degree will give me credentials because getting a degree in the West is valued... In order to do, in order to REALLY show who you are you first need to prove that you have the knowledge and the prestige [. . .] If you don’t have anything, people will not listen to you. . . . (Interview, September 04, 2012)

[7년 넘게 일하다 보니 비전이 안 보이더라구요. 무언가 새로운 일을 해야겠다는 생각이 들었죠- 한국에서 금융 쪽 사업을 구상하고 있는 중인데 아직 준비 단계라서 말씀드리기 조금 그러네요. . . 물론 일리노이 MBA 학위 받는다고 무언가 크게 달라지지 않겠지만 그래도 미국에서 MBA 학위 받으면 아무래도 한국에서는 인센티브를 주기 때문에 좋은거죠. . . 영어는 많이 늘지 않겠지만

그래도 한국은 아직도 미국 학위를 받으면 나름 똑똑하다고 생각을 하지 않나요?
결국 지식이 중요해요. 그래도 외국에서 공부하면 주변 사람들의 시선이
달라지잖아요. ?]

As the above account delineates, Sungjoo seemed to have a serious purpose and strong drive to pursue his MBA degree. The peer study group for him was “a strong emotional and intellectual help,” and, as he put it, through his involvement in this study group he “gained the power to face challenges in his academic study” (peer group observation post- interview, January, 10, 2013). Based on our conversations and my observations of his literacy learning both inside and outside the two classrooms, it was apparent from early on that Sungjoo attempted to take ownership of his learning, even though he spoke out in whole class discussions less than the other participants, Shinpill, Joonsung, and Jaemin. Yet, he did manage to voice a few ideas during study group meetings (peer group observation, November 1, 2012). Despite Sungjoo’s reticence to voice his ideas during class discussions, he performed well in the written (quantitative) assignments (Dr. Johnson, marketing professor interview, October 3, 2012)

Joonsung: *“I think there’s more than just doing the work. I want to be successful”*

(September 30, 2012).

Joonsung showed his willingness to participate in this study when I introduced my project in the marketing class. Born in Korea, Joonsung visited his uncle in the States every summer during middle school and high school and attended English summer schools. He tells me his fondest memories of his overseas visits were the American lifestyle and food (Individual interview, November 03, 2012). He returned to Korea after the summer breaks and never considered living in the States until after college when he was unable to find a job (November 03, 2012). With the help of his uncle’s “connections” Joonsung was offered a job in Virginia as a financial consultant for a Korean bank (Individual interview, November 03, 2012). Working full-time, he earned an

accounting certificate and was also promoted after a few years. Joonsung told me that his limited English speaking abilities would not get him far because he had to communicate with English-speaking clients on a regular basis (Individual interview, September 30, 2012). As he noted,

I was good, really good at what I was doing. People looked up to me [. . .] I realized that I couldn't respond to my clients in English as fast as I wanted to. More importantly, I didn't know about the American business culture well enough to voice my ideas. My boss didn't want me to leave and even offered me a raise, but I wanted to expand my horizon, learn the culture and be successful- maybe work at Wall Street or someplace like that [. . .] The MBA would be the place for me to learn about American business culture and build connections with Americans. (Interview, September 30, 2012)

[다른 직원보다 일을 잘 했거든요. 잘한다고 칭찬도 받고 그랬어요. 승진도 했죠. 근데 승진하다보니깐 미국 사람들과 프로젝트를 많이 하게 되는데 영어가 빨리 안 나오니까 답답하더라구요. 이거는 아니다... 이런 생각을 했어요. 그만두겠다고 보스한테 말을 했는데 저를 붙잡으려고 연봉을 올리주셨는데 마음이 안 변하더라구요... 다른 곳에서 일을 해보고 싶었죠... 나름 크게 한 번 성공을하고 싶었어요- 제 분야에서. 사실 뉴욕에 월 스트리트에서 일하는게 꿈이거든요... MBA 공부하면서 미국 문화도 더 접해보고 미국사람들과 인맥을 만들어야 좋을 것 같다는 생]

Joonsung indicated that he felt content and happy with his current program by constantly comparing it to his previous undergraduate school in Korea. One of the reasons for this, as he said, was the “diverse group of people” in the MBA classrooms, which differed from the homogenous group of students in Korea (September 30, 2012). In another account, he mentioned that he wanted to make American friends so that he could learn more about American culture. One of his close American friends was a female student named Marta, with whom he “hung out” with on a regular basis.

Joonsung's diligent personality and interest in the program served him well as an MBA student. During this study, he expressed his discomfort with the courses in which he could not make a lot of contributions. Usually, these were the courses he considered as requiring more rhetorical skills (i.e. Ethics course). On the other hand, in the courses that were more

theoretically orientated and quantitative in nature (e.g. accounting, economics, and marketing classes), he felt relatively more comfortable to participate in discussions (September, 30, 2012).

Jaemin: *“I think I need to learn new ways to do the assignments”* (October 30, 2012).

Born in Seoul, Korea Jaemin was 33 years old at the time of this study in 2012. He received his undergraduate degree in Korea and majored in Engineering. Jaemin attended junior high in the U.S. during his father’s stay in the U.S. as a visiting scholar. After returning to Korea and later receiving his undergraduate degree in Engineering, he worked in a Korean company for about 4 years and in a U.S. company for two years in both as an engineer. At the time of his study in the MBA program, Jaemin was part of the MBA student council, helping the program interview new MBA candidates for the following academic year. According to Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung, Jaemin was able to converse with English native speakers with relevant fluency, despite his Korean accent (Group interview, November 15, 2012).

Like Sungjoo, Jaemin seemed to have various instrumental motivations to earn his MBA degree. He repeatedly said that earning an MBA degree in any public U.S. university would help “upgrade” his credentials as he could then use it to help find better jobs later in Korea. He also placed value on and appreciated his work experience in the States (Interview, October 14, 2012). In the program, Jaemin took every assignment very seriously, and he came across as studious and hardworking (group observations, September 13, 18; November 04, 09, 19). Moreover, he regularly contacted me and asked me to interpret the written feedback from his marketing assignments because he was having a hard time understanding the instructors’ feedback. As much as he seemed to enjoy his courses and the new theories he was learning in the classroom, several times in our interviews he showed his eagerness to leave the program. As he stated, “I don’t really care where I go to get a job, but I just want to get out of the academia and do

something practical, like maybe be a manager and work with people instead of sitting behind a desk [. . .]” (Interview, originally in English, December 03, 2012). Due to his interest in working and communicating with people, he enjoyed the courses which had direct implications to business communication and management (i.e. ethics course, business organization course), but had a difficult time in courses that required field specific knowledge and experience (e.g. accounting, economics and marketing courses).

Jaemin was also very eager about maintaining group relationships with Sungjoo, Joonsung and Shinpill, and indicated his need for guidance from and a sense of comradeship with these friends. However, he expressed his disappointment in not receiving much support from them:

We came together as a group in the beginning but then after a while they stopped inviting me to their house. Maybe they were busy. I’m not sure. But, I think I relied on them as my support group. It’s a little-- I don’t know. But, now in the student council I feel better about expressing my ideas, and suggestions.” (Interview, originally in English, November 13, 2012)

Jaemin and I established a strong relationship as a result of his numerous meetings at the student council (which I visited occasionally), as well as our email exchanges and face-to-face interviews. He kept in touch with me long after I finished the data collection.

Chris: *“I like learning about new things, and getting to know people from different cultures”* (September 20, 2012).

Chris is unique among the five student participants in this study because he is the only bi-racial Korean-American student in the program and is considered an American and native speaker of English. When I visited the marketing course to introduce my research project, Chris was the first person to contact me about his interest in my project. After our initial meeting he made an interesting comment: “I know about the struggles international students experience and I know a

little about Korean culture because of my ethnic background-- I'm [pause] half-Korean, but you can note in your documents that I'm from a mixed cultural background and maybe as your- like-secondary participant [. . .]" (August, 22, 2012). I found Chris' sense of self quite interesting considering that he did not racially identify himself to a specific racial identity. As I observed him in this study his identity among the focal Koreans was a constant negotiation process.

Chris was born and educated in the U.S. most of his life, but lived in different places in Europe as an exchange student in college. He had also briefly lived in Europe with his grandparents during his childhood years. After receiving his undergraduate degree at a university in Connecticut (majoring in environmental studies), he worked for a phone company for almost 5.5 years and worked his way up as a sales representative before applying to several MBA programs.

Chris was the youngest of the participants, and he came across as one of the most sociable participants in this study. He was always talking to other students in his peer study group and participating in many of the program's social events. From the early days of his MBA studies, he expressed his desire to build a strong social network with his colleagues and learn about their cultures (Individual interview, August, 21, 2012). In our conversations, he stressed that his main goal was to progress in the program as quickly as possible, but still be able to experience all the opportunities the program had to offer (August, 21, 2012). The MBA experience for him evolved around, as he said in one of our interviews, "taking advantage of the internship openings that the program had to offer, yet be able to learn from the experiences of my colleagues" (Individual interview, September 20, 2012). While many of the student participants expressed frustration about working in group projects given the limited time to complete them,

Chris seemed to enjoy the process of collaborating with his peers in such projects. As he explained:

I don't have a business background like some of them do, but I like to learn. That's one of the reasons why I'm here. But, I worked in this company where no one really talked to each other--you know, talk that you and I have [. . .] I guess the [MBA] program kind of gives me that opportunity to work with people- people with similar goals- build connections [. . .] I hope that I can get a job somewhere where people are a little more interactive [. . .]. (Interview, September 30, 2012)

Despite these goals, Chris had later noted in the second academic quarter that he struggled to find a specific group of people to hang out with. He added that students hung out with those of similar background or culture, which he claimed made it harder for him to join a specific group (Informal conversation, October 21, 2012). Adding to this, he indicated his discomfort being asked about his race when he had to fill out the MBA application forms.

Except for Chris, the four Korean students discussed thus far were considered international applicants, while Chris was a domestic applicant in the MBA program admission process. Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung ended up taking the same section¹⁰ in the core courses, therefore ending up forming a closer bond than did Chris and Jaemin. These three students established a strong bond with each other and decided to build their own informal study group, while Chris and Jaemin built relationships with other classmates.

Other students who interacted with the research participants. Although the current study mainly focused on five specific students, several other students joined in academic and non-academic conversations with the focal participants. Thus, while they were not the focus of the study, they interacted with the five student participants and played important roles in

¹⁰ Because the classrooms in the business building could only accommodate 60 students, many of the core courses held in the building were divided into two sections (section A and B). Half the student population took section A and the other half section B.

establishing social relationships with them. These students, whose overall participation in the study was marginal, were also first-year students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Although it is impossible to portray all of these students, I will briefly mention two of them who established close relationships with me and with some of the main participants of this study. For example, there was one American female student, Marta, who had lived and taught in Spain a number of years, and was fluent in Spanish. She was particularly close to Joonsung, and often participated in the interview topics on peer group participation and positioning. Marta was especially active in proofreading the manuscripts of the marketing memo assignments for her group members. She particularly established close bonds with Joonsung while working on class projects and studying together, even sitting together in some of the classes. Both were also considered “successful” students in the marketing course: Joonsung was publically recognized in class as winning second place in the marketing simulation project, and Marta received the highest grade point average in the marketing course first quarter.

Another first-year MBA student who marginally participated in this study due to his active involvement in the two classroom discussions (Marketing and Ethics) and his close relationships with the other participants of this study was Mark. Originally from Wisconsin, Mark’s family had immigrated to the U.S from Australia when he was five, and he had lived most of his life in the same city in Wisconsin. Before graduate school, he worked for a non-profit American organization, Teach for America, in Chicago for two years. He described his journey in graduate school as “establishing a new identity as an MBA student” (Individual interview, October 22, 2012).

Mark was in Chris' peer group in the second academic quarter in which students had the freedom to choose their own study group. In the group, he provided constant mentoring in both academic and non-academic respects (Chris. Informal conversation, October 20, 2012). Although Mark was not in the same peer group with Shinpill or Jaemin in either the first or second academic quarter, he developed a close relationship with them in the business ethics course early in September. Jaemin particularly noted that Mark was more open-minded than most Americans he had met in the program, and commented on how much he learned about class participation from watching Mark speak in the ethics classroom (interview notes. September 25, 2012).

Most of these dialogic interactions among the students took place in various academic contexts: classrooms, business school building hallways, and more frequently, the peer study groups. The spaces where the students enacted their positionings in these various spaces in one way or another played an important role in their academic socialization process and their evolving sense of self in the MBA program.

Table 3.3

List of Main Participants

Category	Name	Ethnicity, Gender & Age	Previous Major	Work experience	Stay in U.S.	Professional goals
Students	Shinpill	Korean/M/32	Marketing. Finance	5 years at E-mart in Korea as associate manager	1.5 years	Take over father's company
	Sungjoo	Korean/M/33	Finance	7 years financial analyst in Korean bank	2 years	Start new business venture in Korea
	Joonsung	Korean/M/31	Finance	3 years financial analyst in U.S.	4 years	Work at Wall street
	Jaemin	Korean/M/33	Engineering	4 years Korean company. 2 years in U.S. company as engineer	5 years	Work as a manager anywhere, preferably the States.
	Chris	Bi-racial (Korean-Caucasian)/M/28	Environmental Studies	3 years phone company. 2.5 years as sales representative of company.	Most of his life	Undecided
Instructors ¹¹	Dr. Johnson	African-American/M/mid 40's	Marketing	Professor	30 + years	n/a
	Dr. Kline	Caucasian/F/early 50's	History. Law	Lawyer and Professor	Most of her life	n/a

¹¹ Other than traveling abroad, the ethics instructor has never lived abroad; however, the marketing instructor has lived abroad in his home country (Trinidad) until his arrival in the States in junior high as an international student himself.

Academic Literacy Sites Within and Beyond the Classroom

I define academic literacy learning as any organized intentional instruction in the production and interpretation of a given subject matter and organized through class discussion and written language. Referring to this definition, academic literacy practices include whole-class and group discussions on the given subject matter situated in the marketing classroom, ethics classroom and in the peer study group. I argue that these academic literacy practices represent “the interplay of agency and structure” (Holland & Levinson, 1996) in which the construction of identities occurs within the enactment of an ideology of learning and of valued forms of knowledge in the MBA program. The three academic literacy sites that I have chosen to observe, the ethics course, marketing course and the peer study group, were situated on campus near the business building. However, there were times when the site of the peer study group meetings was situated outside the classroom and university space to include meetings at cafés and student homes. Even though the peer gatherings were situated outside the classroom space, the main intention of the academic literacy practices in these gatherings was to get students to complete group projects for their core courses (e.g. marketing course). The three literacy sites were selected in this study in response to the following questions: a) What academic literacy practices did my group of Korean students struggle most to make meaning of? and b) How do the focal Korean students mediate their construction and negotiation of literacies in their peer social groups as they rework the meaning of academic success?

Table 3.4

General Description of Literacy Activities

Sites	Main literacy activities	Content & Purpose	Participants
Ethics classroom in university auditorium	Whole- class and group discussions and case analysis written assignments.	Cultivate ethical awareness and ground rules in different discipline	119 First year MBA students
Marketing classroom in business building	Whole- class and group discussions and case analysis written assignments	Introduce students to basic marketing concepts through readings and simulation projects.	119 First year MBA students
Peer study groups in business building, cafés, student homes.	Group projects, and discussion about core course assignments (e.g. marketing course assignments)	Space for students to collaborate on assigned group projects for core courses.	119 First year MBA students divided into groups of 5-6.

Data Collection Procedures

My data collection procedure was mainly guided by what occurred in the field, yet in order to keep the project on track, I reflected on my research questions and research design. Framing each student participant as a significant constituent of a social interaction, I relied on my field notes to document ideas and exchanges among the participants. In order to get a clear understanding of the students' perspectives and an in-depth understanding of each of their attitudes and comments, I pursued their thoughts and opinions further through interviews. My interviews, however, did not include all the faculty, staff members or students in the MBA program as I had hoped. This was due to time constraints, conflicting time schedules and the interest of the participants in responding to my interview questions at particular moments. A few staff members in the program and other students who had built some relationship with the focal students were more willing than others to take the time to talk openly and share their thoughts.

Observations. My observation of the two courses for the first two academic quarters took place three times a week. I observed the marketing course from 9:30 to 10:50 a.m for section A and 11:00 to 12: 30 for section B twice a week, and I the ethics course from 1:00 to 3:00 pm once a week. I observed the first quarter peer study groups after the classroom visits, but students did not meet as often as I had expected; therefore, during the first academic quarter I focused on observing the classrooms and interviewing staff members and the focal students. The number of peer study group visits increased near the end of the first quarter and into the second. I managed to observe five peer study groups in which my student participants were members or had close interactions. We met several times in the business building, cafés off campus, and several times in one of the group member’s homes. I attempted to schedule the five peer study group visits on the same day that I visited the two classrooms, but my schedule had to be adjusted due to the different scheduling of each of the five peer groups. Other than the scheduled visits, I also observed the student council meetings, which I was only able to visit a few times throughout the first two quarters. I also had several informal conversations with the focal students and other students that provided invaluable insight into the literacy activities and political landscape of the MBA program. As I did not always have my recorder ready on these “unintended” conversations, I wrote scratch notes once I got home. All the scratch notes were later rewritten and modified as field notes.

I collected my data from multiple sources. The research methods included interviews, informal conversations, document collection, field notes, and observations of classroom and group discussions in and outside classroom environment. In the classroom observations, I sat near the focal participants and took field notes. In the marketing class, the small class size and group discussions in each section (class was divided into section A and B) enabled me to move

around and observe different groups that the focal participants participated in. The marketing instructor and the students in each section seemed to get used to seeing me in the classroom and focal students emailed me to inform me of class discussions on days I was unable to visit the class. In the ethics class, I sat at one of the roundtables where a group of my focal participants sat. While the focal students did not always sit in the same table each week, I managed to go around and visit two to three tables each class so that I was able to visit each focal participant's table every two weeks. By the end of September, the entire 119 MBA students knew of my research and were more open about candidly sharing their conversations about the course readings and even their opinions about the course. Conversations that occurred in the two classrooms were recorded in my field notes. Conversations that occurred outside the classroom, be it the hallway, a café or student home, were audio recorded.

In the literacy activities of the peer study groups, I audio-recorded and took field notes of their discussions and informal everyday talk about the program, assignments, the course atmosphere, the instructors, and even their life goals. I started to visit the five peer groups near the end of the first academic quarter and continued until the end of the second academic quarter in December. Attempting to visit all five groups as often as I could, I visited between 4-6 groups each week, the meeting time and place based on the group members' schedules and availability. Considering the sporadic nature of the group scheduling, I relied heavily on my focal student participants' phone calls and emails for the time and place of the group gatherings. During the study group discussions, I sat nearby and left the tape recorder on in the middle of the gathering area so that it was visible to all members in the group. During the first two weeks the students took turns staring at and asking me if the recorder was on before the groups began their conversations. After a few weeks of visiting, it appeared that the students were comfortable with

the recorder for I noticed that many made jokes and even sang songs into the recorder when I left the room for bathroom breaks.

Interviews. Consent letters for interviews were described and distributed at the first meetings so participants would be aware that all conversations (whether formal or informal) would be written down and/or audio recorded. All interviews with instructors, focal students, secondary students, and staff members were conducted casually. Interviews with instructors were conducted after classroom observations. They were conducted in the instructor's office after office hours so that students would not walk in during the interviews.

Conversations with the focal students often occurred after class in the late afternoon. I also took field notes of three of the student council meetings and two of the staff meetings that I had the opportunity to attend. Permission to take field notes in the classrooms and the staff/student council meetings had been granted prior to visits with all individuals. In the student home visits during peer study group meetings I introduced myself formally to the home owner so that he/she was aware of the presence of the audio recorder. I also introduced myself to group members in each of the five study groups before my initial visits. The main interview questions for both the secondary informants and main participants basically emerged spontaneously as the conversation unfolded. However, I checked on my interview protocol to make sure that I covered all the points. In order to have all participants expand on their responses, I provided them with some examples of interview questions that I would potentially ask. For instance, for the focal students, I asked more specific questions about their academic and professional goals and their opinions about the courses they were taking. After completing the interviews, I usually crosschecked the responses from the focal students with those of the secondary participants and faculty about the class discussions and assignments.

Documents. I was fortunate to have all five student participants enthusiastic to participate in my project. They shared their assignments, the written feedback from their instructors, their reflection papers, the power points they made for group presentations and any additional course readings relevant to their assignments. The ethics and marketing instructors also allowed me access to the course materials and rubrics. Through the staff members I gained access to demographic information of the 2012 student population, their work backgrounds, and information about the admission process. In addition, I collected public documents about the MBA program through the program's website. All written products from the focal participants, such as their written assignments and feedback were collected and copied.

Summary. The following table (Table 3.5) summarizes the data sources and materials collected in this project.

Table 3.5

Summary of Data Sources

Data sources	Kinds of data used
Public information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> websites (MBA program) course materials (course readings, syllabus, grading guideline/rubric) public MBA documents (pamphlets readily available)
Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflection (theoretical/interpretive and personal)notes field notes (class observation + group work observation+ interview notes) audio recording (focal participants: group and individual interviews and study group gatherings)
Researcher + Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> individual interviews (primary + secondary participants[student + instructor]) focal student participants' group and individual interview focal students + instructors' background information
Participants + Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written assignments written feedback on assignments observation noters of classroom and peer group interaction

Data Analysis

With a qualitative study design in mind, the data analysis was an ongoing endeavor. In order to understand how the focal Korean students negotiated the MBA program's academic literacies and created alternative discourses (new spaces) and identities in the new academia, I triangulated the data via various means of data collection. Another important point to mention is that during the data analysis period, there were a series of decision making processes involved. While there were several data sources used in this study, there were three main data sources that I carefully analyzed throughout this study. These included the ethnographic informal interviews (audio recordings of focal students and instructors), classroom discourse (field notes of classroom discussions), and focal students' narratives on how they navigated the two classes' individual written assignments and peer group projects during their first two academic quarters (field notes and audio recordings of peer study groups talk on these assignments). Some of the more microanalysis came from both the focal and non-focal students' classroom dialogues, while other analyses came from their informal dialogues in their peer study group.

Data analysis occurred both at the micro and macro level. The micro level of analysis occurred through the message-by-message analysis of social interactions, i.e. specific literacy events and included some macro level of analysis, i.e. making interpretations about the data analyzed. The rationale behind looking at the social interactions at the micro level is underscored in Erickson (1982), who states that "while the individual is the locus of learning, this learning does not take place in isolation. Learning by individuals occurs as reflectively adaptive transactions between the immediate environment and the individual, in which each stimulates change in the other." (p. 10). As researchers who deal with both classroom and outside the classroom discourse from an qualitative viewpoint indicate, the basic unit of analysis in such

research is not only the individual, but also the group of people they operate within. In the present study, the purpose of microanalysis was to create a fine-grained analysis of a specific group of Korean MBA students' classroom and peer group interaction over a period of two academic quarters. By fine-grained, I mean a close look at the language and indexical meaning of both the linguistic and nonlinguistic cues derived from students' social interactions in and outside the classroom. Looking at the small bits of interactions enabled me to establish a direct relationship between the social interaction and academic literacy socialization of these students.

At the macro level, taking into consideration the educational and cultural background of the focal student participants provided a sociocultural framework in which to examine how they perceived and negotiated the literacy events in the three literacy sites. I looked into how the Korean educational practices informed, for example, how they may interpret what it may mean to be "good" and "successful" students in each classroom setting. The race, gender and cultural background of the focal instructors in this study also informed ways they interacted and positioned students as certain types of people during classroom discussions.

Below I show how the data analysis and selection process took place in three overlapping stages, which aimed to provide insights on students' academic socialization experiences.

Phase I. Phase I included the audio recording of the Korean students' individual/group interview about the each classroom activities and the peer study group dynamics. Audio recordings of each instructor's opinion about literacy events that were relevant to the focal Korean students academic experiences were noted in this stage. These interviews occurred during the first two academic quarters, depending on the permission I received from the Korean participants and the classroom instructors. The audio recording was done during the events such as classroom discussions or students' peer group discussions. After the recording was complete, I

scanned all the recorded material according to their date of appearance and location of recording. These audio recorded files were listened to and certain themes that were repeated in the instructor's and Korean participants' interviews were transcribed for a close analysis. Data analysis in phase I was guided by the following research question: a) In the various academic literacy events, how are the focal Korean students' and instructors' perceptions of valued academic literacy practices different from or similar to one another? General key themes emerged in the audio recordings:

- What it meant to “do well” in the classroom
- The role of English and content knowledge in students' “success” in and outside the classroom.
- What it means to be role models in the program
- Using time wisely

Phase II. Phase II of the data collection included an *unmotivated look* at the field notes in the three literacy sites. Although the eventual aim was to review all the materials and compare them with the audio recordings before discovering the strip of revealing and most illustrative events, it was also important to jot down field notes of the the data “giving consideration to whatever can be found in any particular conversation, subjecting to investigation in any direction that can be produced” (Sacks, 1984, p. 27). The unmotivated look was described by Schegloff (1996). He points out:

Virtually all of these results emerge from an ‘unmotivated’ examination of naturally occurring interactional materials-that is, an examination not prompted by prespecific analytic goals [...], but by ‘noticing’ initially unremarkable features of talk and of other conduct. The trajectory of such analysis may begin with a noticing of the action being done and be pursued by specifying what about the talk or other conduct- in its context- serves as the practice of accomplishing that action. Or it may begin [...] with the noticing of some feature of the talk and be pursued by asking what- if anything- such a practice of talking has as its outcome. (Schegloff, 1996, cited in ten Have, 1999, p.103)

This unmotivated look at the data is naturally influenced by the theory (ten Have, 1999).

Consequently, this phase was also influenced by my knowledge of literature on academic socialization, and social interaction. Examining the data without a specific goal was followed by indexing of the naturally occurring events and how the focal Korean students made sense of particular literacy events in each site. These initial notes appear as an “index to the whole event” (Erickson, 2006, p.185). The indexing of events enabled me to go back and forth in the field notes of the three literacy sites and eventually decide what field notes to focus on in detail and compare with the audio recordings. A few important themes that emerged in the field notes are noted in the following:

- Focal students talk about reputation of certain students’ in the classroom and peer study groups in relation to knowledge
- Non-focal students talk about their peers’ personality as well as peers’ talents they notice in class and peer study groups
- Core course knowledge (Statistics, accounting, marketing) provides Korean students agency in marketing class- some Korean students are called on in class to explain theories.
- Many Asian international students check core course assignment and test answers with a few Korean students
- Korean students try to defend Korean students guilty of a recent “cheating” event.
- Students contact one another for information useful to complete assignments (social networking appears important)
- Korean students “cheating” incident mentioned in each literacy site I observe
- Free riders do not have much say in group projects. They take notes.
- The word, system, is repeated among a few focal Korean students in their talk with other international students
- Marketing instructor talks about the importance of being “successful” in the MBA program and gives several examples of “successful” international students.
- In peer study groups, peers evaluate one another for participation grade on a given form presented by the MBA program director
- All Korean students and a few other international Asian students build a group text to text each other about relevant information about ways to do the assignment.

Phase III. Having completed the unmotivated look at the data and indexed the field notes of various literacy events in the field, I selected certain segments from the field notes which were the most representative of events that impacted students' academic socialization experiences. The selections of segments was compared with the key themes that emerged in the interview audio recordings. Selection of segments was influenced by the theory and research questions guiding this study. The primary criteria for selection included 1) events that were most revealing in terms of what focal students said and for what purposes 2) events that were highly communicative, collaborative and interactive, and finally 3) events that had important consequences for focal students' academic socialization. Certain units in the audio recording and field notes suggested that many of the focal Korean students co-construct what counts as knowledge and socialization through these collaborative units in the classrooms and beyond the classroom setting. These collaborative units, as will be seen in the results, are seen as students define the meaning of "academic success" while engaging in a wide range of verbal communication such as collaborative, contesting talk, questioning, arguing or negotiating their understanding of the literacy expectations in the two classrooms and peer study groups. The messages that emerged in these interactions that are analyzed in Chapter 4, 5, 6 were context-bound and were constructed by students and teachers as they engaged in social interactions. Thus, my purpose in focusing on a small but representative sampling of these interactions was to reveal the purposes of students' social interaction inside and beyond the classroom context in relation to the notion of "academic success." The following themes guided the findings chapters.

- Identity changes based on learning context and kinds of knowledge one has (focal Korean's voice is heard after marketing instructor helps give voice to a few Korean students. A few Korean students begin to contest, question and negotiate literacy expectations)
- Focal students negotiate MBA literacy expectations using field knowledge

- Focal students gain agency among other international students through field knowledge (definition of “academic success” emerges)
- Instructors’ story telling events motivates international students’ participation in and outside the class (The stories focus much on international students’ exceptional content knowledge in a given subject matter)
- The discourse of “academic success” influences peer social dynamic (peer social hierarchy) and focal Korean students’ perception of group members in study groups

Role of the Researcher

Understanding participants’ meanings are always woven in with our own ideologies and stances, not apart from them. I believe as researchers who we are, how we position ourselves, and our own contextualized representations provide a lens through which we interpret and understand people’s experiences. It is naïve to assume that we are devoid of pre-existing notions – our worldviews, our perspectives, and our own developing culture—and so, as qualitative researchers, we are part of the work and our views and beliefs guide and inform the things that we observe and see in our fields (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Erickson, 2007). As such, I understand that my beliefs developed, at least in part, through my own experiences and histories—and this plays a large role in my interpretation of both what it means to be a Korean international graduate student in the U.S. (just like my focal Korean participants) and what it means to be a researcher in the MBA faculty staff meetings. Being a Korean student who speaks both Korean and English with relative ease colors my analysis of the data, but it also gives me specific insight and a point of reference into the nuances of the Korean students and their experiences as well as the faculty members’ perspectives on international students in the MBA program. From my specific vantage point, I am interpreting the events in the classrooms/ staff meetings and peer study groups as both an insider and outsider as I continue to shift between my loyalty to the Korean participants and MBA faculty members.

My own local history and the present study. The nature of my research and my dual position as a Korean graduate student and a researcher make it impossible for me to merely be an observer. I do not consider myself as simply an outsider among the MBA faculty members and the focal Korean students in my project. Having participated and talked to staff/faculty members in the policy meetings, and curriculum design efforts I have become a trusted researcher for their program, particularly in relation to the international student language needs. Yet, I may be perceived as an outsider by the faculty members because of my close relationship to the Korean participants, who have entrusted their honest opinions and struggles about the MBA program to me. I hang out in this state of “double-consciousness,” moving between an insider and outsider status (Henry, 2010, p.368) constantly. However, I am in a precarious situation where I am never a complete insider in any one place because of my dual role. For example, my project allowed me to visit many faculty meetings and individually meet with faculty members, but it also prevented me from being immersed in any one place. The faculty usually saw me as a researcher for the ESL program who was “helping” them, and the Korean participants sometimes saw me as a “researcher,” which I discovered in the early months of this study.

Negotiating dual identities. At one of the group interviews with the focal Korean students about a recent “cheating” incident, Joonsung (one of the Korean participants) turned to me in the middle of the conversation and asked, “Do you know what the faculty members are saying?” Since it was known by the Korean students that one of my roles in the faculty meetings was to “inform” faculty members of any useful information about international students’ academic needs and struggles in the program, the Korean students’ curiosity about the conversations in the meetings were expected and, it turns out, difficult to avoid. Before visiting the faculty members for interviews (and then visiting the focal Korean students for individual

and group interviews) I struggled with how to represent myself—more specifically, I tried to think of ways to “reposition” myself as an observer. However, past histories, experiences, and personal relationships complicated my entry into the field site as well as my role as a true participant observer. In several instances such as the above, the Korean students asked me questions, but they also attempted to engage me in the conversation so that I could feel a part of the “Korean” group. Our existing relationship and familiarity with each other made it possible for me to be embraced by the group in terms of conducting research, but it also created a setting where the group was eager to include me in their conversations about different topics about the MBA program and how they navigated the literacy expectations.

Henry (2010) talks about the identities that are often inscribed on us, despite our efforts to mark out identities for ourselves – in this case, I wanted to be more invisible than I really was or could be so that I did not make faulty evaluations about the students and the instructors’ experiences in the program. My personal and professional identity as a researcher and a fellow Korean colleague were part of the research process and it played a role in how I articulated the story of my participants and how they perceived me as well. However, I also believe that this experience allowed me to represent my participants as complicated individuals who have multiple identities that are self-assigned or ascribed by others. These constructed identities position instructors/administrators and the Korean students in this study differently depending on the topic of the interview questions, the participants’ personal feelings and beliefs, and life experiences.

My role in this research. For the past 4 years, I worked as a teaching assistant for the ESL service courses and it was in 2011 that I built a relationship with the MBA faculty members as an informant in their monthly faculty meetings. It was in 2012 that I began to establish a close

relationship with the a group of Korean MBA students as I embarked on this project. Thus, I was not a stranger in the MBA program, and many faculty members and students saw me as part of their school landscape as I participated in the staff meetings and “hung out” with the Korean students and other students in the program.

I felt fortunate enough to build professional relationships with a few faculty members, often emailing each other on weekdays to discuss issues related to international students’ participation in the class. I believe that my perspective as an international student provided them with a unique insight into such issues. I also built a more personal relationship with the focal Korean students, texting one another on a regular basis, meeting up for coffee, or having dinner together. In this sense, the line between my personal and professional role began to blur with each passing month, particularly with the Korean students. As I established friendships with the Korean students, I was able to get an insider’s perspective into the rich details of their lives and experiences in the program. I saw this role as beneficial, especially in getting glimpses into their lives, as I continued to “hang out” with these students in the peer study group meetings at school, at their homes, and in coffee shops. At times, I would stay up until dawn with them as they worked on late-night group assignments. I had thus become a “member” of many of the Korean students’ peer study groups, and they made sure that I was not “missing out” in many the conversations that seemed relevant to my research topic. Furthermore, I saw myself as a supporter rather than an evaluator of the focal Korean students’ experiences in the program since the purpose of my research was to tell the story of how these students navigated and made sense of their academic experiences in the program. Through this study, I hope to highlight the complexities that emerge in a group of Korean students’ understanding of the program’s literacy expectations as they conceptualize what it means to be “good” students in their program of study.

Chapter 4

Images of Success in the Marketing Class: The Model International Student

You know the movie, The Help (2011)? Aibileen tells little Mae, ‘You is Special.’ I want to instill that moral in them, because they can be models for other students. . . .

(Marketing Instructor, September 04, 2012)

It’s the last week of classes of the first academic quarter. Every Tuesday in class, the marketing instructor, Dr. Johnson, reports success stories of international students he has taught over his nine years of teaching. It was a means to motivate his international students to be “successful” learners (Dr. Johnson, individual interview, September, 04, 2012). Today, he begins the class praising three Korean students, Shinpill, Joonsung and Sungjoo, as “model international” students for ranking in the top three in last week’s marketing simulation project¹². After class, as I interviewed Shinpill and Sungjoo about their reaction to their title as “model” students, Shinpill explained how the event had influenced his status among his peers:

Actually, Dr. Johnson overly praises specific international students who do well in class just to make them feel special. It’s nice, but embarrassing when you find out that he is praising you as one of the successful students. But, I guess I can’t complain too much. He’s a professor and his recognition has changed my relationship with my Asian friends. They listen to me more, and I also let them know that having intellectual knowledge can make up for their limited English skills. I am proof of that example (laughter)[. . .] It also doesn’t hurt that people look up to me and really listen to me (pause) I think they realize that I’m actually smart (smiles). Knowledge gives me recognition. (Shinpill, individual interview, October, 09, 2012)

[널 학생이 수업 시간에 조금만 잘하면 교수가 그 학생을 칭찬을 해요. 조금 민망하죠. 사람들 앞에서 칭찬을 받으면 누구든 민망하죠. 근데 뭐~ 나쁘지는 않아요. 다른 학생들 앞에서 저희들을 인정 해주니까 다른 아시아 친구들이

¹² The simulation project is conducted on an online program that allows students to execute a complete marketing strategy based on a given brand. It includes market opportunity analysis, advertising, pricing and basic sales force management decisions, and a simplified profit analysis. The simulation game is set for 6 decision rounds, with each round taking 30 minutes to one hour to complete as students compete with one another.

저희들을 대하는 태도가 많이 달라지긴 했죠. (웃음) ... 우선 말을 잘 듣죠. 그러다보면 우리도 개네들에게 조언을 많이 주고 숙제도 가끔 도와주기도 하고... 영어 잘한다고 다 되는 것 아니라고 그들도 이해를 한거죠. 결국 지식이 있어야 인정을 받는다는 것 이해를 한 것 같기도 하고.... 뭐... 알아서 이해를 했겠죠... 그래도 막상 교수의 인정을 받으니까 나쁘지는 않네요. 예전과 다르게 우리에게 신경을 많이 써주시니까 좋네요 (웃음). 나 같이 영어 못하는 사람이 나름 똑똑하다는 것 미국 애들이 알았겠어요 (웃음). 결국 영어 잘한다고 살아 남을 수는 없는 것 같아요. 아무래도 지식이 있어야 인정 .]

Shinpill's response illustrates how an instructor, a figure of institutional authority, plays a central role in imbuing the successful international student (model international student)¹³ with potential authority among his peers. As seen in Shinpill's brief response, the professor's endorsement authorized him to advise other international students that intellectual knowledge¹⁴ can be a valued resource in becoming an "academically successful" student as well as a means to compensate for his limited English. Such advice is an important element in the success stories of international students, and offering such advice naturally places the model international student in a position of authority among his peers.

What this vignette shows is that the valorized image of the successful international student has become a model for many Asian students in the program, who, like many other L2 (second language) speakers, struggle to voice their agency and membership in the MBA community (often due to their limited English). This image has become a romanticized representation of the ideal L2 student who successfully negotiates institutional restrictions by drawing on his intellectual knowledge and expertise to gain recognition, and thus legitimacy, as an able student in the program. That is, the image of the model international student has come to

¹³ I use the term, 'successful international student,' and 'model international student' interchangeably.

¹⁴ The term, 'intellectual knowledge,' is used throughout this chapter to refer to the students' field-specific knowledge relevant to the core course assignments. It is viewed as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which the model international student practices in the MBA program.

be defined along the dimensions of intellectual knowledge, and it is often through public recognition of their field knowledge that a student's legitimacy as a competent student is established in specific academic spaces.

In this chapter I explore in greater depth how this image was (re)produced in the marketing classroom and began to circulate among peer groups. I do so by specifically examining how a group of Korean (model international) students often referred to reported success stories when discussing structures of power in their peer study group. First, I explain how the image of the successful student was construed through a recursive process (Irvine & Gal, 2000), and explain how this process comes to serve as a semiotic basis for the focal Korean students' authority over what it means to be a successful student. Building on recursivity, I then show how an interdiscursive analysis (Agha, 2005; Silverstein, 2005) of past successful stories helps us understand ways the model student identity emerges and become naturalized. Next, I present two distinct examples of reported past success stories: one from the marketing instructor and the other from the MBA academic advisor. Through these examples, I show how the identity of the "intellectually competent" persona of the model international students is given a specific shape in the current local space. Finally, I conclude this chapter by showing how these past stories recursively rationalize structures of power in their peer groups and, specifically, among other Korean students.

Recursive Process

The image of the model international student was produced through a recursive process in which structures of power were rationalized by reapplying models of hierarchical relations from one context to another context (Irvine & Gal, 2000). The application of this process is best seen in Irvine and Gal's study (2000) in which they examine how European ethnographers in the

19th century extended their ideological views of the relationship between Europe and Africa (Europe as sophisticated vs. Africa as primitive and barbaric) to the internal relationships among African languages and cultures. The authors show how the ethnographers extended this ideological view by imposing such hierarchical oppositions to African intergroup relations (e.g., light-skinned, Islamic Fula oppressing dark-skinned, “primitive” Sereer), and by understanding Africa in terms of a history of conflict and conquest. This historical context, in turn, served as an important basis for justifying Europe’s imperialist intervention (p. 53-54).

Since recursivity involves discourse to construct parallels between two different contexts of social relations (in this case, parallels between Europe and Africa and also between different African cultures), a recursive discourse is highlighted in this chapter to show how a story teller’s authority in these communicative events (e.g. various success stories in different timescales and spaces) comes to serve as a semiotic basis for the focal Korean students’ authority over what it means to be a successful student. The recursive process is also used to show how the image of the “model international” student is reproduced interdiscursively through these success stories and the here-and-now space and time of the current academic context (e.g. marketing class).

Using a recursive process, this chapter follows three main communicative events that took place at different times and spaces to examine this phenomenon: 1) the reported success stories of international students in the past, 2) the circulating image of the model international student (Korean students) in the here-and-now, and 3) the recursive application of power structures from the success stories into the current peer study groups and the Korean MBA community. I examine the communicative events through a semiotic process of interdiscursivity (Agha, 2005; Silverstein, 2005) through which discourses about intellectual competence come to be linked to specific images of the model international student in the classroom and peer study

groups. Below, I first discuss an interrelated process of interdiscursivity, which will help illustrate how the image of the model international student emerges through these reported stories.

Interdiscursive Processes

Michael Silverstein says that interdiscursivity emphasizes the “relationship of event to event [that] is projected from the position of the personnel – authorial and/or animated senders, responsible receivers, nonresponsible monitors, and so on -- of some particular event in respect to one or more others” (Silverstein, 2005, p. 7). This understanding of interdiscursivity, then, draws my attention not just to how discourses are linked together, but how such interconnectedness of the discourses (in the various communicative events) comes to be felt and recognized by the “model international” students. In this sense, interdiscursivity offers an important way of looking into the meaning-making systems of institutional power, social differentiation of peer group members and cultural beliefs that create identities for these students. It also allows me to ask what goes on within a bounded communicative events that may have implications in educational contexts, ultimately linking up with issues of power.

The notion of interdiscursivity also has important consequences for how certain chains of communicative events can wield significant influence on how we build and evaluate identities. Rather than simply viewing how certain social and language ideologies are imposed on students’ and instructors’ perception of students’ identities, what I see important is examining *how* certain models of identities emerge at the local level. The evaluation of these processes, thus, allows the image of the international student to become embedded and naturalized within the larger social structure of the MBA program. For this reason, understanding the interconnectedness between

the three communicative events add to our understanding of how the current image of the model international student is construed.

Spatiotemporal extension. Spatiotemporal extension (Park, 2009) is also another important concept in understanding the construal of the model international image in this chapter. Closely connected to interdiscursivity and recursivity, this concept was used by Park (2009) to show how meanings attached to past texts are unfolded in present time, thus showing how actions and events at distant places in the past are invoked and connected with the present. This concept is applied in this chapter to highlight how the “model international” students make sense of past success stories in their here-and-now learning context. It adds another level of significance through their participation (as audience) in a chain of semiosis (Silverstein, 2003) as the stories of these past successful students help (re)produce the image of the current model international student in the current marketing class. Thus, the meaning of the reported success stories and the current image of the “model international” student is created through a chain of interdiscursivity in which various academic spaces in different timescales are linked up with each other in particular ways. While this chapter cannot fully explicate how the current image of the successful international student circulates within the MBA program, this chapter will examine on how this image emerged and began to be known by other students. Below is an example of how it all began.

How the Stories Began

The marketing instructor reported past success stories of international students that spanned his nine years of teaching the course. By making reference to these past events, the instructor provided evidence of positive features (e.g. intellectual competence) of successful international students in his class. Since the stories were presented as having a continuous

connection with, and relevance to, the present international students in the class, these stories were potentially instilling his current students with expectations about what an intellectually competent student should do or look like in order to be academically successful in the MBA program. As the present international students in his class listened to these events, the value and importance of the stories' message became interdiscursively established in the current context.

To get a better understanding of the value of the story telling event, I did a post-observation interview with the instructor about the purpose of this story telling event. In the interview, he noted that it was common for international students to have lower participation grades in comparison to their native counterparts. He found that telling stories about other international students' achievements gave them the motivation to "do better" in class (Dr. Johnson, individual interview, October 2, 2012). The students' limited English communication skills coupled with their fear of exposing their non-native like English was a common reason for their unwillingness to participate (October 2, 2012). The reported success stories of these students who overcame their linguistic (English) limitations and fear was a means to instill in them what an image of a model international looked like:

Researcher: How did the story telling event start?

Dr. Johnson: Well, the stories give them hope, and it gives them a model to follow. And it lets them know that there are other students who've done well despite their language issues and fears [. . .] The students [in the stories] used a variety of learning resources to get their voices heard. And many of them have succeeded-- I think they've done quite well. You will be surprised to hear how knowledgeable these students are.

Researcher: How do they react to them?

Dr. Johnson: I think they have a positive reaction to them. I've heard from a lot of students that these stories are inspiring, so I continue to tell them every year.

(Dr. Johnson, individual interview, November 13, 2012)

As seen in the interview excerpt, the story telling event¹⁵ became an important part of the instructor's goal to give voice to those students who struggled to communicate in English. To get a glimpse of what the success stories look like and how they began to be used as a genre of its own, I present two example stories in the next section. The first example (a) is from the marketing professor, Dr. Johnson, who began this story telling tradition. The second example (b) is from the MBA program's academic advisor, Mr. Smith, who learned about Dr. Johnson's story telling practice and began to use his own stories during the program's orientation sessions.

Two Reported Success Stories

Dr. Johnson's story-telling features a Korean female student, Song. As the instructor told his story to the class, he emphasized Song's use of limited English expressions; yet he praised her use of sophisticated marketing concepts to construe her ideas. The example below makes clear what the instructor is implying: generally many international students in his class feel self-conscious about their English, and so they often rely too much on memorizing and reciting ideas in grammatically perfect English, which always sounds fabricated. However, in the example, Song emanated a sense of confidence even if she adopted more simple English words. More importantly, her knowledge and insight in the field of marketing helped her simplified English to be distinguished from the "rudimentary" English often associated with basic level ESL (Norton, 1997).

¹⁵ Dr. Johnson is an African-American instructor. While I do not elaborate in detail about his racial and cultural background in this study, I assume that the instructor's story-telling may reflect the rich story-telling tradition that is commonly performed by African-Americans as part of their oral tradition.

(a) Song was-- well-- she didn't have the highest grade. But she had that ability to stand out. And, she was well-versed in the marketing concepts [. . .] There was this one incident. It was funny. It was years ago back in my teaching when I was in Florida. I was being observed by a fellow colleague [Mark]. We had mock presentations for the case competition [. . .] A student had a presentation using the "push-pull" concept. No one but Song spoke out about how he [the student] was using the concept incorrectly. So, she drew this diagram on her notebook with one of those --what do you call them-- black sharpie pens? She held it up for everyone. She started explaining-- how there was a difference between a technology pull and marketing push. Now, she didn't memorize or have a script because I could tell she was trying really hard to sound natural. I remember she said something like, "bottom section is a market pull and motivation is by the market force." [. . .] Her English wasn't perfect. But you know, who knew she had all these wonderful ideas until she spoke- *Chae-go* ("supreme") [. . .] I was surprised. I remember my colleague saying, 'wow, this is interesting and creative. She seems to know what she's saying.' [. . .] The point here is to be creative. Use your expertise, you know, things you already know [. . .]. (Marketing classroom observation notes, September 25, 2012)

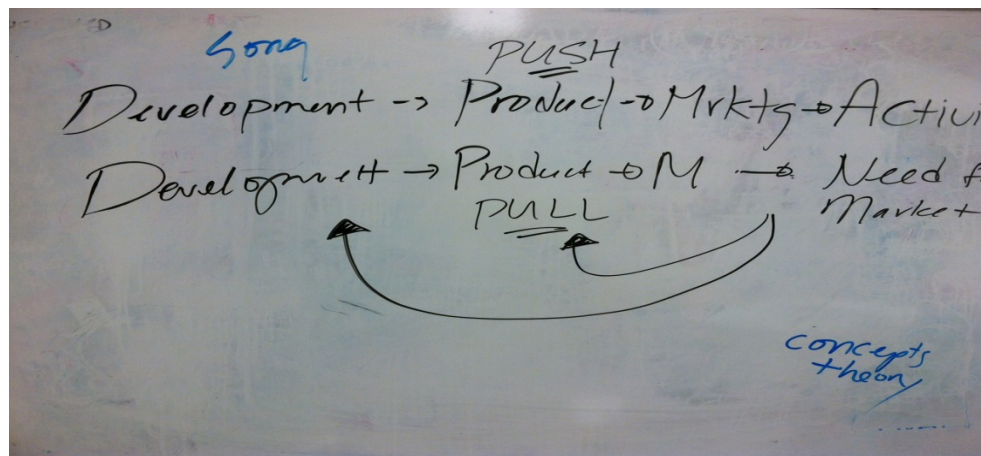


Figure 4. 1. The instructor's drawing of Song's diagram

In praising Song's use of her limited English speaking skills to construe her marketing theory, the story telling event invoked something more than a lesson for the international students.

Despite her limited English, the instructor's surprised reaction to her knowledge of key marketing concepts gave groundedness to the assessment of Song's intellectual competence.

Furthermore, the fact that the instructor remembered Song's diagram of the "push-pull"

marketing strategy reconfirmed his assessment. What is also noteworthy is that the instructor appropriates a hyperbolic Korean expression, “*Chae-go*,” which literally means ‘supreme/the best’ in Korean. This appears to be a gesture as a way to acknowledge the Korean students in his class. By employing this affective expression (*Chae-go*), which he interprets for the rest of the class through a “thumbs-up” gesture, he is again testifying that Song was an intellectually competent student, even if her English speaking abilities were relatively limited.

Song’s use of a diagram also showed ways international students can interact and learn through modes of communication that go beyond spoken language. Song’s intellectual competence and her creative means to express it was further confirmed when the evaluative comment attributed to Mark was also cited (“*wow, this is interesting and creative. She seems to know what she’s saying*”). The colleague’s position as a faculty member also provides grounding to the reported story. It implied that, despite Song’s sub-par academic standing, her creative use of the diagram was valued as an alternative mode of class participation. Furthermore, by adding Mark’s comment in the story, Dr. Johnson was affirming that Song’s contribution was valued by those *who* really mattered (instructors), and, therefore, the reported story is viewed as legitimate.

However, in examining the instructor’s story in greater detail, one might question the interdiscursive power of the story and its effect on the present international students. For example, the instructor’s report of Mark’s overzealous comment may appear out of context, considering that Song’s diagram of the ‘push-pull’ strategy was a well-known diagram that students were already familiar with. On a similar note, Song’s explanation of the concept was not something that the instructor would characterize as a highly sophisticated practice of knowledge (even if, according to Dr. Johnson, Song’s explanation revealed her intellectual capabilities). Thus, this makes us consider how authentic Mark’s remark was, and whether something to the

same effect was indeed spoken and possibly remembered accurately by Dr. Johnson.

Nonetheless, for the average international student listening to this story, its apparent groundedness was enough to imbue it with a sense of importance. And it may be may be important enough to transform it into evidence of Song's competency as one representation of the ideal "model international" student.

Sometimes in the stories, the international students' failure to actively participate in the classroom was invoked to show how they can participate in other MBA academic settings beyond the classroom environment. In the following example, during the new semester orientation, Mr. Smith (the MBA academic advisor) talked about the language and cultural shock that non-native students often encounter upon entering the program. To illustrate how students can overcome such barriers, he recounted a story about a Taiwanese student who found the MBA student council to be a safe place to voice his ideas without simply being labeled as a 'non-native speaker.'

- (b) He was learning how to do the assignments, learning how to handle the pressure to get things done. On top of that he was adjusting to the new language, country and the new classroom culture. One thing I remember was his shock-- that students in the class actually had intellectual debates with their professors. Imagine the shock! But he was smart, an intelligent individual [. . .]. When he was in the student council we talked a lot, because the student council is all about sharing and implementing ideas to help improve our program. Well, I was impressed with him. He was not only a leader in the council, he was a smart one [. . .]. He had all these great ideas about policy planning for incoming international students. And guess what helped? He studied business and educational policy back home, and that came in handy. Even the student council president said that he was an awesome person, and remembers him being a great communicator who had a lot to contribute [. . .]. During those internship seasons, I wrote him an excellent recommendation. And he got an internship at a consulting company nearby. . . (MBA orientation observation notes, August, 16, 2012)

Similar to Mark's evaluation in the first reported story (a), one notices in the second story (b) that the student council president's comment is somewhat out of context, making the reported story less credible: *'He was an awesome person, and [. . .] a great communicator.'* The correlation and relevance of the student president's two comments appears at first glance unrelated to one another (e.g., *awesome person, great communicator*). Perhaps what the student council president wanted to say was something like *'he was a sociable person, even if his English wasn't the best.'* There could be many ways to interpret the reported comment; perhaps the student council president was not even a native speaker to begin with. Whatever the reasons may be, the event shows how the juxtaposition of a reported story (from an authority figure--Mr. Smith) with current the space of the fall orientation is presented as powerful grounds for rationalizing the importance of intellectual competence. For example, as Mr. Smith reported in the story, the student was "smart" and applied his background knowledge in policy planning to come up with "great ideas." Thus, while Dr. Smith makes note of the Taiwanese student's leadership and communication skills, he emphasizes the student's intellectual competence as an important feature in his contribution to the council: *I was impressed with him. He was not only a leader in the council, he was a smart one. He had all these great ideas [. . .]* . This is further validated when Mr. Smith writes the student an "excellent" recommendation for an internship position, which, according to Mr. Smith, the student succeeded in getting.

In this example, the space of the student council mediated the international student's position in the academic program as an important member. The story also implies that the linguistic barrier for most international students (who are non-native English speakers) cannot be easily broken down; thus, their limited English verbal communication does little to offer them agency in the MBA program. What is common in the two stories is that the meaning of the

intellectually competent student goes beyond simple language competence to include knowledge expertise as a more valued skill.

Thus, these examples show how the stories told by authority figures interdiscursively link temporally and spatially removed events with the present. They also illustrate that the lack of English communication skills can be, to some degree, compensated for by non-linguistic knowledge skills in various learning spaces. The reported stories, then, serve multiple purposes. First, they address the question of why international students should bother to look for alternative ways to participate in the program, and, more specifically, the classroom, in the first place. As contexts of meaningful participation in the program are brought into the international students' present time and space through stories, the students are told that active participation is not evaluated solely on one's verbal communication abilities but also on the content of what is being communicated--content knowledge. Second, the spatiotemporal extension that is practiced in the reported stories also positions the "model international" student at places that matter--places where intellectual competence is perceived as more valued than English language competence. Finally, the stories present the voices of legitimate people (people of authority in the academy) as authoritative voices who evaluate the events as they are reported to the present international students. For instance, the instructor's stories bring his viewpoint to the here-and-now context of his classroom and his students. In doing so, he presents the voice of the faculty and staff members as relevant evaluators of international students' intellectual competency, and thus as monitors of what it means to be a "model international" student.

Through the reported stories, the ideology of the intellectually competent international student is given a specific material shape for the current focal students in this study. These stories thus set the stage for how three Korean international students are positioned as the current

“model international” students in the marketing class. The next section specifically shows how, through spatiotemporal extension, the image of the “model international” student from the reported stories is re-appropriated recursively in various current spaces. It also shows how the authoritative voice of the faculty (as legitimate evaluators of students’ intellectual performance) is clearly manifested in the current time-space of the three focal Korean students, Shinpill, Joonsung, and Sungjoo. This phenomenon is specifically examined below in the social relationship between the model Korean students and members in the international peer study group, in the Korean students’ act of giving advice to other international students, and in the intra-ethnic othering that occurs within the Korean MBA community.

Rationalizing Structures of Power

The two reported stories above illustrated how the authority of the story teller (instructor/MBA advisor) comes to serve as a semiotic basis for the three Korean students’ authority over what counts as intellectual competency in various spaces (e.g. marketing classroom, and student council). The relationship between the instructor/MBA advisor and the student can be seen as differential legitimacy (Hanks, 2005), it being the legitimate evaluator (instructor/MBA advisor) vs. international student. That is, the international student in the story gains legitimacy as “model international” student only upon its conferral by the instructor/MBA academic advisor. This distinction is further naturalized by viewing the successful international student as having qualitatively different intellectual competence than the average international student. Competency in this sense appears to be inaccessible to average international students. As seen in the reported stories, it was surprising when an international student demonstrated such competence. For instance, in the first reported story (a) Dr. Johnson’s story stated, “But you know, who knew she had all these wonderful ideas until she spoke- *Chae-go* [supreme] [. . .] I

was surprised” (see reported story (a)). And during the MBA orientation, the academic advisor made a similar evaluative comment about a Taiwanese student: “Well, I was impressed with him. He was not only a leader in the council, he was a smart one. He had all these great ideas about policy planning [. . .]”(see reported story (b)).

Yet, even the current “model international” student (the three Korean students) needs to have his competency verified by a legitimate evaluator such as an instructor ratified by the MBA program. Through such verifications the success stories of international students reproduce a hierarchy of legitimacy between the instructor and the current “model international” student. So when these stories were heard by the current model international students (Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung), the same opposition of legitimacy recursively applied between the them and the average international student. For example, Sungjoo noted that he “gained more confidence to talk about [his] ideas with international friends” after the marketing class’ public recognition.

[많이 달라진 것 같아요. 어떻게 보면 인터네셔널 친구들 앞에서 나름 재 실력에 대해서 자신감이 생긴거죠 . . . 인정을 받았으니까 . . .] (Sungjoo, informal conversation, October 19, 2012). In the following sections, I show how the three Korean students believed that they stood in a relationship of superior authority to the average international student¹⁶ in their peer group.

The international peer group. This recursive process (Irvine & Gal, 2000) in which the parallel application of authority from the marketing classroom is seen in the international peer group, played an important role in imbuing the successful Korean students with authority among

¹⁶ The average international students in this study are those who were not acknowledged publicly by the instructor as having distinct field knowledge.

their international student peers. I examine how the model Korean students extend their instructor-conferred legitimacy in their international peer group and give advice on how to become “successful” students like themselves.

The international peer group in this study consisted of six international students, mostly Asian students, that Shinpill (with the help of Sungjoo and Joonsung) had informally made by recruiting international students whom he perceived to be intellectually resourceful. As three Korean students discussed conditions governing the constitution of their peer group, they also provided insight on what constituted a “intellectually resourceful” member. Below, Shinpill and Sungjoo discuss how they recruited members for this peer group:

Shinpill: After the professor acknowledge me in class, other Asian students came to me and asked if we could study together. But, I didn’t want to waste my time. If I wanted a study buddy, I would rather have someone who had some knowledge in finance or economics.

Sungjoo: Yeah, and Shinpill asked me first to study together so we could check our answers for the statistics we use in the economic course. We ended up getting a lot of the same answers, so we know we have a similar level of expertise in economics. So, it saves us time.

Researcher: So, in your group you said there were two Taiwanese, one Japanese, three of you guys. How did you choose your members?

Shinpill: In reality, other Asian students from our summer group heard about us three working together and a few asked if they could join. And, I made an excuse and told them that my house was too small to accommodate everyone. I just said that because I couldn’t tell them upfront that I didn’t want them in our group because they weren’t

useful. We already know from their grades and what others say that they aren't the smartest students. They will slow us down.

Sungjoo: Haha. Think about it realistically. If we took in everyone, can you imagine the chaos? It would be like a tutoring session. And me, Shinpill and Joonsung would be doing all the assignments and they would just copy it from us. But like Ren and Tomo (Taiwanese and Japanese members of their group), we knew that they were getting pretty (good?) grades on their economics assignment. So, I asked them if they wanted to join. Because at least they understand the assignments.

(Shinpill and Sungjoo interview, October 25, 2012)

In maintaining the exclusivity of their international peer study group, the three Koreans are recursively reproducing the hierarchy of legitimacy between the competent international student and the average one. Here, they are metapragmatically (Silverstein, 2001) situating themselves as having authority over the exclusivity of their study group, and thus implicitly building an authoritative role in the intra-group dynamic of the international study group. To safeguard this social space, Shinpill gathers the group each week in the private space of his home, claiming that his "house is too small to accommodate everyone" but spacious enough to accommodate members of the study group. Furthermore, the meaning of intellectual competence is also socially redefined in this study group to mainly include one's expertise in knowing how to do complex numerical calculations in the fields of economics and finance. However, the legitimacy of this valued knowledge in the study group is not conferred by the Korean students' success alone. In reality, their authoritative voice in claiming what is valued knowledge or not is discursively referred back to Dr. Johnson's public recognition of these three Korean students' success. As Dr. Johnson publically recognized Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung's academic

achievements in class (October 09, 2012), they gained authority as intellectually competent students and were able to re-appropriate this oppositional model of hierarchy by becoming evaluators themselves when they recruited students for their study group.

Worth noting is the possibility that a power struggle among the group members could have arisen anyway, since the Korean students' authority may not have translated favorably in the group context. However, it seemed that most of the members acknowledged the Korean students' authority and appeared receptive to their allocated role. To get a glimpse of members' perspectives on the group dynamic, I interviewed a Taiwanese member (Ellen) about her pride in taking on a dual role: collecting information on weekly assignments for the group and proofreading the statistics assignments. In the interview, Ellen positions herself as an important member of the group because she is able to offer her accounting background knowledge, which allows her to give feedback on the Korean students' accounting homework. She also uses her social connections with other Taiwanese peers to provide the group with updated information about the instructor's unscripted expectations for weekly assignments. In addition, Ellen also participates in the Korean ideology of age-based hierarchy; she is the youngest member in the group and thus accepts the relatively subsidiary role of doing administrative work.

Ellen: I think everyone has a clear role. Shinpill, I think, is like the leader. And I am the youngest so I help out like give them lots of information about professor's expectations-- kind of like an administrator person [. . .]I just ask some of my Taiwanese friends or other group members, so I read their feedback and I share it with the study group so we don't make the same mistake.

Researcher: So, being the youngest--are there any expectations in terms of work load or the kinds of work--?

Ellen: It just happened that way. I guess in Korea age is kind of important? I learn that from Sungjoo “oppa”[big brother]. But I understand and there is no kind of pressure. They didn’t force me to do anything. They just notice I am good with information, so they suggest I do it. It’s not a big role in the group, but I think it is an important role they give me--But I am good in statistics too, and I can tell if some of the calculations are wrong. Even Sungjoo asks me to check his assignments. And, sometimes, I ask Shinpill “oppa” if I am not sure of the answer because he is good at statistics. He got first place in the pharmism.

Researcher: So, you call him “oppa?” That’s a Korean label you call someone older--older brother.

Ellen: haha. I like it. I think it is like showing some kind of respect to someone older, right? He is like an “oppa.” He helps me with my assignments too. They are really nice and I know they respect me even if I am the youngest.

(Ellen, individual interview, October 30, 2012)

This example highlights the hierarchical relationship of the intra-group dynamic in two ways: It is represented by both age-based hierarchy and by knowledge-based hierarchy. The age-based hierarchy between Ellen and the Korean students is a reflection of a prominent Korean cultural ideology that places value in one’s loyalty, obedience and respect for an elder (Park & Kim, 1992). This Korean ideology is entextualized (Silverstein & Urban, 1996) in the current space of the local study group. For example, Ellen made reference to her young age as one possible factor for positioning herself and being positioned to do administrative work when she claims, “it just happened that way.” In doing so, she further helped naturalize the Korean students’ authority and thus legitimacy as group leaders. Moreover, she also confirmed their authoritative position by

making reference to them as *oppa*, which is a Korean term for “older brother” and often used to indicate respect for an older male of close relationship. Thus, by entextualizing the Korean ideology of age-based hierarchy, Ellen also participates in the reproduction of the Korean students’ legitimacy as model international students.

In addition to administrative work, Ellen emphasizes her knowledge in accounting as an important skill to show that she too could provide resources for the Korean members. She notes that Sungjoo, the 2nd place winner of the pharmism project, had even consulted her to check his accounting homework. By making this reference, she situated herself as an intellectually competent member of the study group, and at the same time legitimized the three Korean members as evaluators of her intellectual competency. Thus, examination of the hierarchical relationship from Ellen’s and the Korean students’ perspectives shows how both macro and micro practices inform the social relationships in peer group contexts. One salient macro factor that influenced the social hierarchy in this study group was the Korean ideology of age-based hierarchy that was embraced by the members in the group. At a more micro level, the Korean members positioned themselves and were also positioned by other group members as evaluators of what counted as valued knowledge. What we can speculate based on the two interviews is that the same oppositional hierarchy of legitimacy seen between the instructor and the model international student is thus recursively applied in the hierarchical relationship between the Korean “model international” students and Ellen.

Advice to other international students. The second event in which the Korean model students recursively established their authority occurs when they give advice to members of their study group about what it takes to become successful students in the MBA program. Such advice-giving is significant in maintaining legitimacy in the program, and offering advice

naturally places the adviser in a position of authority among the advisees. In the following example, Shinpill, the first place winner in the pharmism project, informs a Taiwanese and Japanese group members of the importance of focusing on your expertise in order to do well in the courses if one is to earn the respect of their instructor and not look ‘bad’ in class:

When you are in marketing class or economics or any kind of class, you don’t have to force yourself to speak. I didn’t speak a lot [. . .] When Dr. Johnson ask[s] me questions in class, he ask questions I have answers to like Korean market or something like that. You can also prove yourself with knowledge or information that is exceptional. Then it will be easier for the professor to remember you, and you do not look bad in the class [. . .]. If you can’t find any information to give, then I don’t know, just smile [. . .].
[Originally in English] (Shinpill, observation notes, November 13, 2012)

Similarly, in another example, Sungjoo, the 2nd place winner in a marketing project, warns the average international student not to talk too much in front of their native speaker colleagues about their ideas unless certain they can support their points with evidence. He also claims that it will be difficult and embarrassing if an international student is unable to elaborate on ideas when the instructor requests further explanation. From Sungjoo’s view, maintaining one’s silence is an active means of avoiding potentially embarrassing moments caused by limited English speaking skills. However, he believes that finding the opportunity to apply their field expertise or cultural work experience in the class discussion is perceived to be a valued form of knowledge.

Sungjoo: When you talk in front of the class or in your group, I try to understand what they say[. . .]. Because they are natives, they can say anything about some kind of idea. It all sounds good and interesting. But if you can’t speak English spontaneously it can be difficult to find the right expression to explain the real detail of the idea. So, sometimes it’s okay to stay quiet. You can save face. If you can do it, that is great.

Joonsung: But, it depend[s] on [the] situation. I say, if you can’t do it don’t try to start.

Sungjoo: Yeah so little comments with no support will make[s] you look stupid. And the professor said you can use your special knowledge and experience to participate in the class when you can. You can talk about work experience [. . .] you can talk about some kind of theory or explain concepts and graphs because it can look different. He says you can be creative [. . .].

(Observation notes, originally in English, November 06, 2012)

In both examples, the Korean model students not only offer authoritative advice on how not to look “*stupid*,” but also advise them not to overuse English when one lacks the ability to fluently communicate in it. According to Sungjoo, the inability to fluently use English will invite negative evaluations from their native speaker counterparts. He suggests that the best way to save face is to focus on what one can truly offer: field specific knowledge or stories about relevant work experience. Such advice to the average international student implies a hierarchy of authority. Like a teacher reprimanding a student, the Korean students gently admonish the average international students’ attempts to participate in class discussions that require fluent English communication skills. In doing so, the Korean students warn international students trying to imitate a native speaker-like English when they know it is almost impossible to do. By giving such advice, it appears as though the Korean students claimed a position as intellectually competent students while positioning the average international student as helplessly incompetent.

When giving advice, the Korean student makes reference to the instructor’s advice from the reported stories: focus on sharing their field knowledge expertise or personal work experience can be one means to become academically successful, and thus competent, students. By making reference to the instructor’s advice, the Korean students’ voice is mixed with that of

the instructor; thus, it produces a heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981) statement that “laminates¹⁷” the instructor’s authority onto the Korean students’ advice (Goffman, 1974).

However, there may be a few limitations to the analysis I have provided. First is the likelihood that the Korean students misinterpreted the instructor’s notion of the “model international” student or that the notion may have become reinterpreted to have a different meaning based on who was using it and the context for which it was being used. Second, some instructors may not endorse field specific knowledge as valuable criteria for evaluating a student’s intellectual competence. For example, some instructors may value students’ overall oral participation in the classroom, which may not necessarily require students’ field specific expertise. Despite the possibility of the Korean students’ skewed interpretation of the instructors’ view of what it means to be a “successful” (competent) student, what is important to note is that the interdiscursive embedding of the instructor’s voice itself (praising international students’ achievements in the reported stories; public recognition of the three Korean students’ achievements in the pharmism project) helps transform the Korean students’ interpretation of model international student into an authoritative advice. It may be safe to say then that they are positioned as intellectually competent students by virtue of the instructor’s authoritative voice, and the average international students are positioned as willful admirers of such competency.

Thus, as we have seen, the interdiscursive connections were the core of establishing the three Korean students’ image as model international students. Considering the spatiotemporal extension of the reported stories, the authority of the story tellers was brought into the present discourse of the Korean students’ learning in the MBA program. This was seen when the three

¹⁷ Goffman (1974) uses the term lamination to refer to a context-specific overlay, or the notion of meta-communication in his frame analysis. The overlay of the instructor’s authoritative voice with the Korean model students’ voice appears heteroglossic in nature when the Korean students give advice to their peer members.

Korean students used this authority to enlighten the average international student about what it means to be a “successful international” student, and thus channeled the storyteller’s authority into the peer group. The Korean students’ authority also became a semiotic basis to extend their authority over the average Korean international student. This is specifically seen in the next section through intra-ethnic othering of the “average” Korean MBA students, who were not perceived as “model” students in the marketing classroom.

Intra-ethnic othering among Korean students. Language and knowledge are elements of what Bourdieu has dubbed “cultural capital,” that is, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are acquired through social interactions (Bourdieu, 1986). The cultural capital in the international peer group was field specific expertise in economics and accounting because these topics carried value in the group as interchangeable for another’s feedback on the core course weekly assignments. What counted as valued knowledge, however, was contingent on who evaluated it, where it was being evaluated and for what purposes, which, according to Bourdieu, is a product of an ongoing social and political process (Bourdieu cited in Hanks, 1996). Thus, for those who had limited cultural capital, gaining membership in a peer group may have been a challenge. This challenge was best illustrated when the successful Korean students disinvited an “average” Korean student whom they deemed intellectually “unfit” for their international peer group.

For the average Korean student, the three Korean students’ success symbolized a nationalistic triumph for the Korean MBA community. Yet, the average Korean student misinterpreted this communal triumph as an implied consent for their membership in the international peer group. Tension that arose in this misinterpretation is best illustrated when one Korean student attempted, but failed to regularize his discourse by fitting it to the discourse of the peer group. In the following interview, the three Korean focal students discuss their

perceptions of other Korean students wanting to participate in their peer group. They described these students as having limited knowledge skills beyond their soft skills (e.g. social skills):

Researcher: Are they different from the average student in the MBA?

Shinpill: There isn't much difference. It generally means that you don't hold distinct field knowledge that is useful for the group projects. So, you may have some knowledge, but nothing that makes you stand out from the rest.

Researcher: So, they have less to offer compared to your group members? Can you give an example of the average Korean you're referring to?

Shinpill: Our group members have background knowledge to offer. They have either studied, for example, accounting in their undergraduate years or have lots of work experience in marketing, so they can easily interpret what all these numbers and concepts mean. It's an equal partnership. I give them my answers, they give me theirs. Oh, yes, your questions. Well, for example, so, Jaemin, you know the engineer guy? He's Korean, but he can speak almost like a native speaker but he has a bit of a Korean accent, and his class notes have some grammar error. But his English is probably better than any of us. But we call that a surplus. Every American speaks English, so Jaemin's English skills don't really stand out as a special skill.

Sungjoo: I think he attended middle school in the States. Maybe his English is good, but not good enough to be a distinct skill, you know what I mean? . . .

Shinpill: I know he wants to be part of the group. But, he has no skills. I know he tries to prove himself useful by sharing his class notes with us even if we never asked for it. But that doesn't give him access to the group. He can work with his assigned study group
[. . .] We actually don't really need his class notes and if we wanted help, we would ask a

native speaker. That would be common sense, right? I mean, I feel bad, but his engineering background, what use is it to us?

Sungjoo: But he's pretty good with math. He knows a little here and there about statistics, but, yeah, not good enough like Ellen. But like Shinpill said, his English is not perfect. Let me rephrase. We don't mean to make him or other Koreans as outcasts. We are just being realistic so that we can get things done.

(Group interview, November 16, 2012)

In Shinpill and Sungjoo's evaluation of Jaemin's intellectual competency, Jaemin's engineering background was not perceived as cultural capital in their international peer group context.

According to Shinpill, Jaemin's English communication ability was also not perceived to be a valued skill in the particular situation of the peer group because of his Korean accent when he spoke English. On a similar note, the three model Korean students mentioned another "average" student, Ray, who also had an engineering background. Other than his likeable personality, Sungjoo noted that Ray's work experience was not enough to help with the assignments (Sungjoo, informal conversation, November 16, 2012). What they noted as a common feature in Jaemin and Ray was their lack of "true understanding of theories that people who majored in the field of business or economics had" [때 경영이나 경제학을 전공한 학생만큼 이론이

](Sungjoo and Shinpill, informal conversation, November 16, 2012). This response implies that the meaning of valued knowledge in the peer group centered on one's intellectual competency in field specific knowledge that was directly relevant to the core courses.

By disinviting the Korean students judged mediocre, the successful Korean students reinforced their authority as model international students in the local peer context, and placed the so-called "average" Korean on the periphery of the local peer group. However, this did not mean

that every Korean was eager to gain membership in this local group. Other Koreans found or built their own social groups, and applied other skills, such as technical skills (e.g. presentation skills) as a form of capital. For example, one Korean student found a sense of belonging in a group of colleagues from the MBA program's summer English course¹⁸. His likeable personality and social skills helped him gain acceptance in such groups, and in return he would offer his technical skills during group work. While such exchanges were not explicitly communicated, I observed that these exchanges were perceived to be socially understood among students.

Jaemin's case provides another example of such exchanges. Jaemin got involved with the MBA student council because of his ability to communicate in both Korean and English, and noted that his position on the council made him feel he was doing something important (Jaemin, informal conversation, October 30, 2012). He also noted that he had good organization skills, which he had cultivated from his past work experience collecting data for an engineering company (Jaemin, informal conversation, October 30, 2012). Using his organizational skills, he collaborated with faculty members and took on the task of collecting and organizing data on ways to improve the MBA curriculum and policies. Jaemin's response to his membership in the student council was interesting because it highlighted how his bilingual ability had become a form of capital in the context of the student council, thus illustrating how the evaluation of valued knowledge and skills is a social and political process (Bourdieu cited in Hanks, 1996). My interview with Jaemin further illustrates his new-found social positioning in the student council. For this interview, Jaemin requested that I interview him in English because he was fluent in the language:

¹⁸ Incoming MBA students from foreign countries and whose first language is not English are required to take the summer English course before enrolling in core courses in the fall academic quarter.

Researcher: So, what do you do [in the student council]?

Jaemin: I give suggestions to improve the program by listening to international students' needs through surveys. I talk to Korean students too and they give me suggestions to improve the program. But I can talk to native speakers too. I speak English and Korean. You know, I used to live in the States in my middle school years, and worked for a few years in the States. So, I can speak almost like a native English speaker. But I lived in Korea when I was younger, went to college there, and worked there [pause] so my Korean is still a little better?

Researcher: So, being able to speak in both languages, does it help working in the student council?

Jaemin: Yeah. I think it does. So, every year I contact and talk to new Korean applicants and be a spokesperson for our program. I used to work in a Korean company too, so I know how to ask all the questions. I let them know about this and that about the program [. . .] kind of as if I was recruiting them. And, when the council meets I let the faculty know about my thoughts about potential applicants

Researcher: What kinds of information do you share in the meeting?

Jaemin: Well. I don't tell them everything. It would be too personal. So, I just tell them the needed facts like the applicants' credentials and maybe my impression of their social skills. It's a little different in the meetings, since I am talking to native speakers and people from other countries. It's better to stick to the facts. But [smiles] I feel like I'm doing something important for the council and it's good that they will listen to my feedback.

(Individual interview, originally in English, October 30, 2012)

From the interview, we see that Jaemin's discriminatory power over two distinct languages (Korean and English) was a valued form of knowledge in this local space. Moreover, Jaemin's cultural experience both in Korea and in the States afforded him the ability to communicate in two cultures. First, Jaemin's ability to fluently speak in Korean gave him insider's access to information about the Korean MBA applicants during his interview sessions with them. Also, Jaemin's work experience in Korea served as a significant cultural lens, allowing him to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information when evaluating the Korean applicants' work background. Second, Jaemin's relative fluency in speaking English, despite his subtle Korean accent, was not perceived as a deficit in the student council. His work experience in the States also provided him with an acute cultural awareness of how and when to filter information in public council meetings.

Through all these examples, this chapter has discussed the meaning of the successful student in relation to the notion of valued knowledge and skills as cultural capital in specific peer contexts, the marketing classroom and the MBA orientation. The chapter has also examined how the notion of cultural capital is quite political by showing that what is consecrated, who is sanctioned to speak and participate, and the values that mediate the meaning of legitimacy and membership can be best understood in terms of the relational structures between individuals and the given local space.

Conclusion: Interdiscursivity and Model International Student

The questions that guided this chapter were a) How are the students represented in the discourse of the marketing classroom? And b) how do the focal Korean students mediate their construction and negotiation of academic literacies in their peer social groups as they rework the meaning of academic success? To begin addressing these questions, I examined

how the image of the “model international” student was closely aligned with a group of Korean students’ notion of intellectual competence. The chapter looked into how various discourses, voices, and images were linked together to construe the image of the “model international” student through different stories of the successful international student.

The agents and receivers (in this case, the focal Korean students) of the reported stories defined the “successful/competent” student based on his or her valued knowledge within a specific set of discourses and social relations, and they naturalized their evaluation of the “successful” or “competent” learner as model international students. This may have led to the implicit reinforcement of unequal social relations and privileges (e.g., the focal Korean students’ authority to choose group members for their “elite” international peer group; group members’ compliance to the Korean ideology of age-based hierarchy) that appeared to have served as the basis for the Korean “model international” student status, including the social groups that were constructed by them. All this was made possible by the power of interdiscursivity to cumulatively construct a specific characterological figure of the successful international learner. This learner is associated with important spatiotemporal locations, is invested with the institutional authority of the instructor, and embodies the ideal international student—qualities that are supposedly demonstrated by their distinct field related knowledge.

While a particular group of Korean students was positioned as successful students in the marketing course by virtue of their expertise, for example, in marketing, accounting and economics, this model image did not always translate equally into their elective classes. Elective courses, such as ethics, required more linguistic communication abilities than the international students were accustomed to in comparison with their core courses. Class discussions, which constituted the main activity of the ethics courses, also required certain rhetorical moves that

Korean students struggled to appropriate in the class discussions. Moreover, the nature of ethics was a more culturally contextualized subject matter in comparison to the core courses (marketing, economics, accounting), and in which no set of “correct” answers existed. Coming from a collective society in which individual voice and notions of ethics had quite different notions from that of the U.S., the focal Korean students struggled to navigate the various subthemes around ethics in the class discussions. In the next chapter, I follow a group of Korean students as they participate in the ethics class discussion and show how these students become collectively positioned as “ethically questionable” students who needed to “(re)learn ethics.” As the students attempt to redeem their model student image, the class discussions become a space of conflicting voices and ideologies about ethics as the focal students are identified by other students and the instructor as a specific type of person based on the (ethics) subthemes covered in the class discussions.

Chapter 5

Image of the “Unethical” Korean Student in an Ethics Class

I think it is a difference, but with that issue I think it is important to learn what it means to be responsible for their actions. And I think this class is the place for them to become more ethically aware--to learn--

(Ethics instructor, October 02, 2012)

I am waiting for the three model Korean students to find out more about a recent “cheating” event that occurred a few weeks ago in the Accounting class. I had heard about this incident from Joonsung a few days ago, but we didn’t have time to discuss the details of the event further because of class. As I look at my watch, Sungjoo comes up to me and the first thing he asks me is “Did you hear about Ray and Junn being caught for finding the answers?” He is referring to the cheating event. To understand the notion of cheating, I looked into all the course syllabi to understand the honor code that the instructor’s referred to. Among the four courses I looked into, the ethics course syllabus was the only course that mentioned the university’s student code. However, the syllabus noted the website to the university’s policies on academic integrity with a brief description as to what constituted such violations. The syllabus stated, “Activities such as copying answers on an exam or plagiarizing assignments constitute violations of academic integrity, as do inappropriate study materials including previously prepared solutions to assignments” (Ethics class syllabus. See appendix B). While I was aware that on the first or second day of classes many instructors warned students to avoid using outside information in their assignments, I felt that there was a lack of clear guidelines as to what constituted “cheating” in the program.

In the “cheating” event, which occurred during the period of this project, Ray and Junn, two Korean male students who were friends of Shinpill, Joonsung, Sungjoo and Jaemin, had

used an outside source (the internet) to find answers for their group accounting assignment and decided to share them with their study group. Sungjoo speculated that someone in Ray's and Junn's group had reported them, and thus their group was found guilty of borrowing outside information (the internet) to find answers. Sungjoo says that the ethics instructor used this event as part of their class discussion to talk about the themes of social responsibility, individualism and collectivism. As Sungjoo discusses the details of the incident, the interview ends with Sungjoo claiming that "even if no one says it was about two Koreans, the more people talk about the event, the more it positions Korean students in a questionable way. They were just sharing information . ." [컨닝한 학생이 두명이었지만 괜히 그 친구들 때문이 우리 한국 사람들 다 이상하게 보는 것 같다는 느낌이 사건에 대해서 계속 우리한테 물어보니까 기분이 조금 그러네요... 제가 컨닝도 한 것도 아닌데. 그리고 컨닝이 아니었던 것 같아요. 그냥 정보 나눴던 것 아 ?]

With the occurrence of a recent "cheating" event which became interdiscursively linked to the current ethics class discussion, Sungjoo's response instigated my interest in the ways Korean students were socially identified in these ethics class. I found myself asking what kinds of identities emerged in the social interaction that took place in these discussions. I also wanted to know how other students and the instructor responded to this "cheating" event with regards to the subject matter of ethics. Wortham (2008) notes that when students and instructors discuss a subject matter, at least two processes generally occur: students and instructors get socially identified as recognizable types of people; and students learn subject matter. Relating to Wortham's claim, students' ideologies on ethics as they participated in the literacy discussions positioned them as a particular "type" of person in relation to the subject matter (ethics). For

example, a group of Korean students in this class were recognized as “unethical” students as their ideology on ethics was at times questioned by the instructor and a group of native speakers.

In this chapter, I follow Jaemin, Sungjoo and Shinpill’s verbal interaction in the ethics class discussion to examine how certain types of identities (e.g. unethical student) emerged for these students as they interacted with other students in the class. I focus particularly on these three students because they were the most vocal during the whole class discussions and had much to say about the instructor, the course and other students. In particular, their verbal interaction with other students was significant in understanding how other students socially identified them and vice versa.

I examine a few examples of class discussions that were interdiscursively linked to the “cheating” event in order to examine how students frame individuals’ interactional behavior as a recognizable type of person (Agha, 2003), and to see how the focal Korean students are positioned in the classroom. Agha (2003) notes that while there are multiple types of identities that an individual or group maintains certain categories of identity become more salient given the individual’s immediate social context. I would like to emphasize two distinct components in the process of identity construction: social categories of identity that get circulated in a specific space of the ethics class, and the characteristics of individuals that get interpreted with reference to categories of identity available within the ethics course. These lead me to also consider how these categories were consistently used to identify other students in the class discussion. I also argue that the categories of identities that emerged in the ethics classroom were drawn from both a sociocultural perspective (e.g. Koreans’ perception of ethical standards and relationships), and different space and time scales (e.g. recent past cheating event in an accounting course) as the

meaning of ethics was being reworked among the Korean students, native speakers and the instructor.

Before I focus on the interactional patterns in the example class discussions, I first demonstrate how the “cheating” event shaped the marketing instructor’s and other students’ perception toward Korean students’ identity in the MBA program, and display how this event figured into and challenged the image of the “model international” student for Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung. I then present and discuss the Korean discourse of ethics and moral values and show how some of its culturally distinct features contrasts with the American culture of individualism. Further, while gender difference is not the focus of this chapter, I briefly note ways female students played a significant role in positioning the Korean students as “unethical” students, while a group of male students sided with the Korean students in this study. I conclude this chapter by displaying the interactional behaviors in various class discussions that begin to challenge some of the Korean focal students’ image as “good” students. I organize the example discussions by salient ethics themes that informed the focal Korean students’ identities in particular ways. This chapter examines four ethics themes: (a) identifying ethical dilemmas in the work place, (b) social Responsibility, (c) individualism vs. collectivism in ethical decisions, and (d) individualism vs. collectivism and conflicting loyalty.

The “Cheating” Incident and Bad Students

Ray and Junn were the two Koreans found guilty of a recent “cheating” incident that occurred in their peer study group. Ray and Jun were not part of the focal Korean student groups in this study, but they were close friends with some of the focal students. Sungjoo and Shinpill were my main informants about the incident and the ways it had affected their identity in the ethics class.

Beyond the classroom environment, it was typical of students to work with their peer study group to complete their core course assignments, and like any normal day, Ray and Junn were looking for ways to help their group complete their accounting courses statistics assignment. According to Sungjoo, Ray and Junn had discovered an assignment on a website that was identical to the accounting assignment, and thus decided to share this discovery with their study group. The incident was reported by an anonymous student, which led to the group's failing grade on the assignment. The event became a form of gossip within the MBA program due to its unethical nature and also because it occurred at the very beginning of the academic year before students and instructors could settle into the new school year (Shinpill and Sungjoo, informal conversation, October 29, 2012). Because the instigators of the incident were Koreans, instructors began to question other Korean students who may have taken part in this event. As a researcher, I was consulted by the marketing instructor, Dr. Johnson, about this incident. He wanted to know if I had heard of any information that would lead to other students potentially involved in this event. In our meeting, I realized that he wanted to defend the students, but felt that their lack of emotional response to the seriousness of the ordeal only made him question their intentions:

You've heard about the recent mishap, I'm sure. Now, I called on these students [. . .] We had a meeting about this [. . .] I care--even if they didn't do this in my class, I wanted to hear their side of the story. I actually expected them to feel bad about all this, but there was no remorse. I found it really strange. Now, is this a cultural thing? [. . .] I want them to be models for other students, but this-- now this--It just-- it makes 'em look pretty bad. Now, why-- why would they do this? (Dr. Johnson, September 28, 2012)

In response to the instructor's comment, I smiled and only commented that it could be a cultural difference, but also an individual one as well. While it is too early to claim that the instructor positioned all Koreans students as being "unethical," his response--unintentionally and tacitly--

reflected his belief that the students' lack of remorse may position them as looking "pretty bad" within the MBA community. I wanted to get a better understanding of how other students perceived the event, so I interviewed one focal student, Sungjoo, who was willing to discuss this event, and an American student, John, who was a member of Ray and Junn's peer group.

When I initially asked Sunjoo about his thoughts on the incident, he responded, "it makes us all look bad, even if it really wasn't totally their fault. No longer are we model students. Some people will potentially link me to this event if I hang out with them [Ray and Junn]. . . But, in reality, the instructor copied the assignment from the internet every year. So, he should have changed the assignment each year. . ." [때문에 괜히 우리가 다 컨닝하는 학생으로 바라보는 것 같아서 좀 안타깝네요. 괜히 저희들의 좋은 이미지가 깎이는 것 아닌가 . . . 솔직히 같이 다니는 것도 신경이 쓰이기도 해요. . . 사실 숙제의 정답들이 인터넷에 떠돌고 있거든요. 교수가 문제를 매년 바꿔야 하는 것 아 ?] (Sungjoo, informal conversation, October 02, 2012)

In this excerpt, Sungjoo worries that his image of the model international student could be potentially jeopardized by hanging out with Ray and Junn. Yet, he defends Ray and Junn, insinuating that the instructor was also in part responsible for exposing the answers by copying the assignment from a source available online. On a similar note, John claimed,

I mean it really could've happened to any of us. The answers were you either got it right or wrong--you know. I'm sure if you looked the answers were there. I think they're just getting a bad rap for it[. . .] It's wrong but people may think--you know--like--it was an Asian, international cultural thing you know? Honestly, I saw the answers too. You just google it and it's right there. (John, individual interview, October 05, 2012)

Sungjoo and John's responses may not fully reflect all students' stance towards the incident; however, their responses suggest that the event identified the Korean students in an unfavorable

way. As I examine how this “cheating” incident became linked to the subject matter of ethics in the ethics classroom, the Korean cultural discourse of ethics and moral values, which appeared to contrast with the western value system of individualism, may shed light on the Korean students’ understanding of ethics in the class discussions.

Moral and Ethical Disposition in Korean Culture

Korean culture reflects a mix of Asian religious influences combined with Confucian values and beliefs that permeate all areas of society, including education and the business world. For instance, the emphases on loyalty to the governing class, respect for elders, obedience to one’s parents, courtesy in human relationships and duty to the community over individual rights are all regarded as characteristics of Korean society (Baek, 2002). In addition, Choi and colleagues (Choi & Choi, 1990; Choi, 1997) pointed out that *chung* is the fundamental concept in interpersonal relationships among Koreans. It refers to the (mainly positive) emotional bond between individuals that slowly accumulates over a long period of time (Choi & Choi, 1990). It is sometimes used in contrast to the concept of reason. For instance, a cross-cultural study between Korean and American youths (Song, Smetana, & Kim, 1987) indicated that participants in both cultural groups made distinctions between moral and conventional transgressions. The study partly supports the hypothesis of a greater emphasis in Korean society on respect for cultural traditions and authority with more emphasis on group achievement than in western societies. This may have implications for cultural differences between Korea and western societies in terms of how they view and understand ethics and morality.

Along the lines of Choi’s study, Baek (2002) conducted an experiment comparing Korean adolescents with those in Britain. What was interesting about her study was that *chung* affected the Korean participants’ moral reasoning since *chung* is a key concept for understanding

the psychological aspects of Koreans. Korean psychologists Choi and Choi (1990) stated that if two people felt ties based on *chung*, the boundary between them was blurred, and a sense of oneness, sameness, affection, comfort and acceptance emerged. Therefore it would seem that this concept plays a significant role in moral and ethical judgment, and sometimes may overwhelm a Korean person's rational thought.

While moral judgment based on emotional concerns shouldn't be interpreted solely as a Korean, culture-specific phenomenon, still, studies show that these emotional concerns are an underlying cultural and psychological feature of Koreans' reaction to moral and ethical standards. This characteristic is sometimes misinterpreted as an opposition to rational thought, and in western societies, it is at times interpreted to be in contrast with individual responsibility (Song, Smetana & Kim, 1987). Thus, from a Western standpoint, it may seem confusing when communal relationships take precedence over individual responsibility and obligations. While there are other factors that inform the Korean students' construal of ethics, the Korean cultural discourse of ethics and moral judgment in which communal bonds and responsibility tend to take precedence over individual ones may shed light on why the Korean male students in this study are socially identified as "outcasts" or as being "unethical" in the ethics class.

-
- Greater value placed on achievements of the "group" over and above that of the "individual"
 - Risk adverse
 - Unlikely to challenge the integrity of a colleague*
 - Value relationships over competitiveness

*relative to other nationalities

Figure 5.1. Characteristics typically associated with South Korean organizational culture (Irwin, 2010)

Gender and Ethics among American Students

A final factor to take into consideration is gender stereotypes in terms of different moral orientations, particularly between the American students in the specific space of this ethics classroom. While stereotypical gender differences are not the main focus of this study, they become a salient feature in understanding ways the American female and male students socially identified the Korean students in the classroom. Thus, while the American males placed less focus on intrinsic relationships when it came to providing solutions to ethical dilemmas, the female students were relatively more attuned to such relationships (see excerpts of class discussions in the following section). Moreover, the American female students were relatively more attuned to organizational rules and regulations, whereas the male students were more willing to challenge them accordingly to work-related advancement and goals. However, this is not to claim that women are more ethical than men or vice versa; nor does this study aim to support this gender stereotype. What I intend to show is how such gender stereotypes were at times reflected in the classroom interaction as students socially identified one another.

Ethics Class Themes and “Unethical” Korean Students

There were six Korean male students and two Korean female¹⁹ students among the 119 students in the auditorium. As I entered the auditorium, students randomly sat in groups of five to six in one of the twenty roundtables. After Dr. Kline asked students in their groups to discuss the assigned case study, students gathered for whole class discussion in which Dr. Kline connected the case study to a specific theme from their course reading (social responsibility,

¹⁹ The Korean female students' perspective on the ethics class discussion would have been helpful; however, they did not feel at ease participating in this study due to the sensitive nature of the cheating incident.

collectivism and individualism, identifying an “Asshole” in the workplace, and conflicting loyalties).

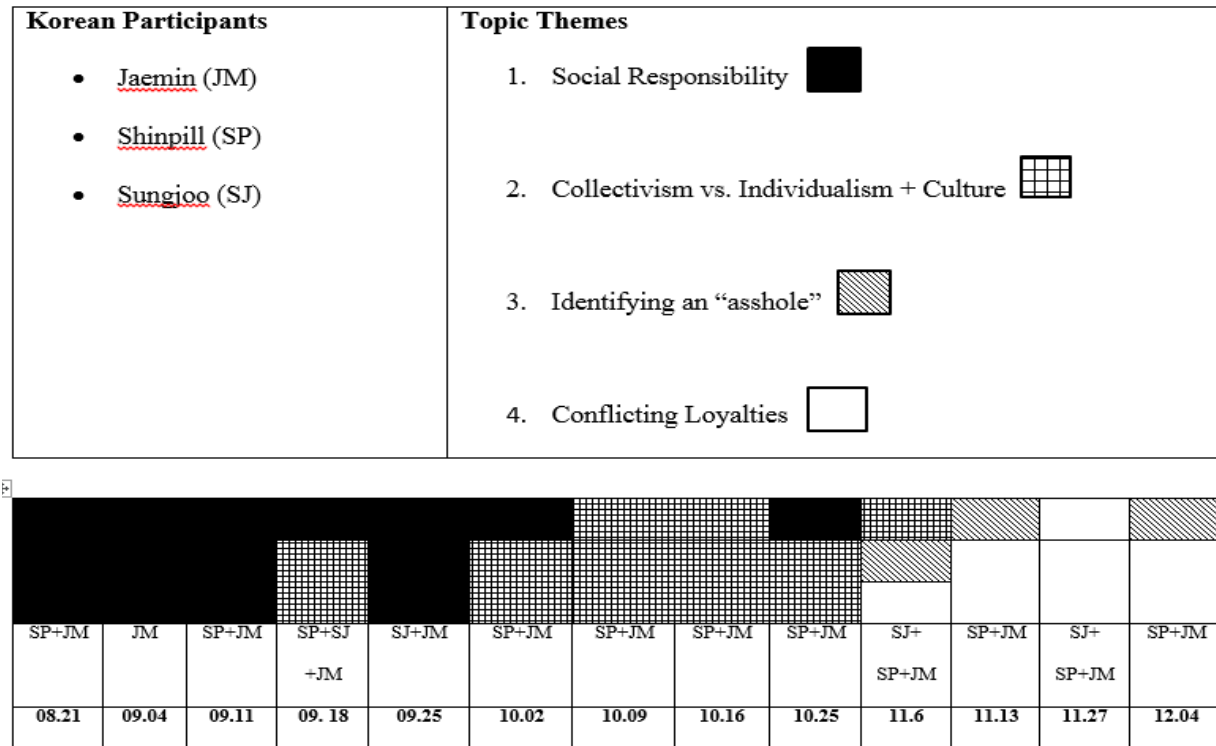


Figure 5.2. Korean participant examples on topic themes and the date on which each was discussed

With the onset of the “cheating” incident and the interdiscursive application of the incident in the ethics topic themes, the Korean students’ identity in the classroom became quite complicated as the instructor felt the need for the students to “learn” to become more responsible for their actions:

Maybe this is a form of cultural discrimination. But I look and I see differences [...]. In some of their responses they approach the issues with a lot of emotions-- taking it quite personally. I think it is a cultural difference, but with that issue I think it is important to learn what it means to be responsible for their actions. And I think this class is the place for them to become more ethically aware--to learn- [pause] well it’s a learning process. (Dr. Kline, individual interview, October 2, 2012)

Taken by itself, this response may simply have been an offhand comment of a few individuals who participated in the “cheating” event. But Dr. Kline, along with a handful of American female students in the class, repeated this culturally-based characterization during whole class discussions. Although there was no single instance in which the instructor and the female students described or treated the Koreans as “unethical” in an accusatory manner, instances in their responses in class discussions suggested their reservations about the Korean students’ ethical stance.

The following examples are class discussions that appropriated the “cheating” incident in connection to the focal ethics theme of that day’s lesson. I focus particularly on the focal Korean students who were most active in these discussions and on other students who interacted with the focal students. The following excerpt of the class discussion covers asks students to identify the ethical dilemma in a specific case scenario. The main question the instructor asks is: How do you identify an ethical dilemma in the workplace? The participants in this discussion include five native speakers (2 male and 3 female), and three Korean focal students, Shinpill, Sungjoo and Jaemin.

Theme: Identifying ethical dilemmas in the workplace. The following example provides a glimpse of the instructor and the American female students’ response to the Korean male students’ opinion about a given case scenario. While the excerpt does not provide a complete illustration of the Korean students’ identity as “unethical” students, it helps set the stage for this emerging identity. The whole class discussion of the case study below caused a lot of tension as a Sungjoo, Jaemin and Shinpill voiced their ethical stance towards the case scenario. It was about group of Korean businessmen who were contemplating whether to use the company’s money for their business clients. The example case scenario presented two Korean

men, representing a software company, about to close a software deal with a company in Turkey after going over the contract by phone. Right when the deal was about to close, representatives from the Turkish company decided to visit Korea for a face-to-face final meeting. They requested a plane ticket for their flight to Korea and hotel payment for their two-day stay. After small group discussions, the instructor brought the class together. In this excerpt, three American female students, Mindy, Stacy and Leslie, lead the class discussion. Mark and Jason, American male students, attempted to defend Sungjoo, Jaemin and Shinpill from the girls' critical questions towards the three Koreans' stance towards ethics. Dr. Kline posed the first question of the ethical decision making framework to initiate class discussion: what issues does the situation present?

Dr. Kline: Remember, there's no right answer, but to resolve it in the best possible way. Yes? (Stacy raises her hand and Dr. Kline hands her the microphone)

Stacy: Our group thought the businessmen should consult their boss and figure things out from there. You don't want to get fired for using the company's money.

Mindy: I think it be okay if the company knew about it.

Dr. Kline: Okay, so the issue is-- is this an individual or collective decision?

Mark: Well, our group asked the expert here (points to Jaemin). Jaemin said the issue is-- should we look at it as an ethical or a practical one --I think he doesn't see it as ethically wrong.

Stacy: Huh? It is an ethical issue. That's what we're talking about here.

Dr. Kline: How is this not an ethical issue? (Mark tugs Jaemin)

Jaemin: Maybe it could be an ethical issue. I can understand your perspective. (Jaemin looks at Sungjoo)

Sungjoo: In Korea it's not [a] big issue to pay for [your] guest. If I make [a] deal happen we can do that.

Dr. Kline: Well we've seen Jaemin and his friends say this before (pause). Interesting. What happens if you get caught?

Jaemin: I think it's unlikely. It happens sometimes. But I think we get reimbursed for business expenses (Shinpill raises his hand)

Shinpill: It's not cheating. It is [a] practical viewpoint and part of a business contract.

Leslie: I think for them it's more of a foreign, you know cultural difference.

Dr. Kline: Yes. It could be. But, from an ethical decision framework, what is the issue then?

Mark: Like Jaemin and Shinpill said, maybe this isn't a major [ethical] issue. It-

Jason: Well. I think it's a different perspective-

Stacy: Then we can ask him (points to Jaemin) to explain (Class observation.

September 11, 2012)

In this class discussion other students participated, but the conversation was heavily focused on the focal Korean students with the group of female students (Stacy, Mindy, and Leslie) leading the discussion. Here, in this short segment, we get a glimpse of a group of female students and Dr. Kline characterize the Korean students as making unwarranted claims about the case scenario. This characterization is not necessarily gendered yet, because in line Jaemin agrees with the female student and Dr. Kline's argument that "Maybe it could be an ethical issue." However, when Jaemin is unprepared to elaborate his ideas or even perhaps challenge the instructor's argument, he turns to Sungjoo for help. Sungjoo and Shinpill join the ongoing conversation, and challenge the instructor and the female students' argument: "It is not cheating.

It is [a] practical view point.” However, the Korean students may not have easily set foot into the conversation without the help of Mark. Mark initially opens the space for other Koreans to speak by intervening in the conversation and speaking in behalf of Jaemin: “Well, our group asked the expert here (points to Jaemin).” Then, Mark and Jason reiterate Jaemin and Shinpill’s main argument: “Like Jaemin and Shinpill said, maybe this isn’t a major [ethical] issue. . . .I think it’s a different perspective.” In doing so, the Korean students’ voices are supported by Mark and Jason’s voice and vice versa (Bakhtin, 1982).

More telling than what Dr. Kline and the female students say to the Korean students is how they treat them. Dr. Kline and the female students refer to the Korean students as either “them” or “Jaemin and his friends,” and use the collective third person referent “we” to set the class apart from the Korean participants. Dr. Kline further initiates this separation from them by allowing the female students to take lead in the discussion and then joining in to support their responses. For instance, Dr. Kline casts the three female students in a teacher-like role, allowing them to make subtle judgments towards the Korean students’ cultural responses to the case scenario. On a similar note, a female student, Stacy, performs this role when she addresses other male students (e.g. Mark and Jason) for inappropriately intervening in the ongoing discussion: “Then we can ask him (points to Jaemin) to explain.” She makes it clear that Mark and Jason shouldn’t speak out of turn when the focus of the discussion was on Jaemin and Shinpill.

Tensions continued to escalate in the class discussion as different cultural perceptions of ethics became intertwined with students’ analysis of the case scenario. However, Dr. Kline used this opportunity in a pedagogically skillful way. She used the student conversations to engage the rest of the class, and at times to even diffuse the tense situations. For example, sometimes Dr. Kline joined the female students in playfully bantering with one or more of the male students to

diffuse the tension that had occurred in prior class discussions. This playful bantering was best seen in the casual conversations that the instructor initiated as part of her warm-up before discussing the lesson that day. This is seen in the following section.

Theme: Social responsibility. As reflected in the student interview below, the week after the Korean businessmen case study, Dr. Kline began a warm-up discussion to talk further about the meaning of social responsibility. On September 18, I sat down with Jaemin, and his two American friends, Dave and Mark, to hear their side of this event. They reported that the warm-up discussion ended up as a playful banter between men and women, with the women positioning the men as legitimate targets of the joke. Here the issue of gender emerged as a subtheme in the conversation, which the instructor pedagogically used to connect to the curriculum theme of social responsibility.

Jaemin: She asks us for examples--everyday situations about social responsibility-

Mark: So, Jessica in our group said, "it's the guy's social responsibility to take out the trash and clean up after themselves." Now that is what you call social responsibility. It was hilarious.

Dave: Yeah. It was funny-- then John was like, "it's not our responsibility-- at least we pay for the bills!"

Researcher: Then what happened?

Mark: One of the girls said, "We aren't your moms!" And Dr. Kline was like asking, "don't we need to be more independent, guys?" But you know she was just playing around (laughter)

Researcher: (laughter) Did you say anything Jaemin? Or other Koreans?

Jaemin: No, I didn't know what to say. Many of us were annoyed. I don't know--We kept quiet.

Dave: Well, she called on Jaemin, and then Sungjoo, but you kinda' froze. But I get ya.

Jaemin: I think she wanted to hear more about cultural difference again. She kept looking at me. But I didn't want to get into that conversation again-

Melissa: But the whole discussion was entertaining. She went on to talk about how social responsibility is very social and how even our social perceptions about men and women were different and stuff and talked about the context. . . . and then talked about cultural differences too[. . .]

(Dave, Mark, Jaemin. Group interview, September 18, 2012)

According to the interview, when Dr. Kline asked the class for everyday situations of social responsibility that students could relate to, a female student, Jessica, created a playful analogy between the male students in the classroom and men who don't take out the trash. While we cannot claim that Jessica produced this analogy solely for educational purposes, it exemplified the interrelationship between gender and social responsibility that emerged in the class discussion. It seemed as though Dr. Kline and the female students were playfully bantering with the male students about men needing to be more independent, while the male students counterattacked this argument by claiming that "at least we pay for the bills!"

Dr. Kline might also have used this playful banter to entice Jaemin and Sungjoo into participating in the discussion about social responsibility. Because of Dr. Kline's intentions to reiterate the subtheme of cultural difference from the prior class discussion, Jaemin didn't find it engaging to go back to this theme: "She kept looking at me. But I didn't want to get into that conversation again." Despite Jaemin's unwillingness to participate, the class and Dr. Kline

appeared to have fun in this informal class discussion. However, as suggested in the student interview, the playful banter also had an academic purpose. Dr. Kline used the students' playful banter to segue into the main curriculum theme of social responsibility and culture. According to Mark, "She [Dr. Kline] went on to talk about how social responsibility is very social and how even our social perceptions about men and women were different." Classroom discourse like this often has multiple functions: while joking with the male and female students to ease the tension, Dr. Kline was also guiding students to consider various factors (e.g. context and culture) when making ethical decisions.

Theme: Individualism vs. collectivism in ethical decisions. In the following excerpt, Dr. Kline has just briefly noted how context and culture are significant factors when approaching an ethical issue. She then interdiscursively links the prior cheating event again into that day's curriculum theme (individualism vs. collectivism in ethical decisions) to engage everyone in the discussion, and perhaps even to "teach" the Korean students about being ethical citizens. The interdiscursive nature of the following class discussion particularly motivated Jaemin and Shinpill's interest to participate.

In the whole class discussion below a few students engaged in the open-ended discussion on the given topic. However, as typical in many of the ethics' class discussions, only a handful of students fully participated. In the following examples, American female students, Mandy and Jean, follow Dr. Kline's lead and actively participate in the discussion. Among other male students, Mark and Jason's voices were heard the loudest as they continuously challenge the girls' responses and side with Jaemin and Shinpill:

Dr. Kline: So, culture, context, situation it all matters. What about in school? If a group submitted something copied from elsewhere, whose responsibility is it?

Jean: You mean whether it is the group's responsibility or an individual's.

Dr. Kline: Correct.

Shinpill: Maybe everyone take [the] blame.

Dr. Kline: What do you mean? (A female native speaker raises her hand and speaks)

Mandy: I agree, whoever participates is also responsible. But, the initiator takes more responsibility.

Dr. Kline: Yes, and it's also about prevention. Do you all understand? You have to realize that prevention is just as important as acknowledging the misbehavior.

Shinpill: Not the students, but institution takes more responsibility. It is [a] collective problem.

Jaemin: I heard that the answer was already there for everyone. So everyone is responsible. So who has to acknowledge it?

Dr. Kline: I'm not sure what you're getting at.

Jaemin: (Jaemin doesn't respond. Looks confused. Looks at Ray and then Shinpill)

Shinpill: The answer everyone knows, because it is [the] same in google and it is on [the] internet. So, instructor[s] have [the] responsibility not to give same assignment and answer. If you google [it] you find the same assignment.

Dr. Kline: The important question is—is it okay to cheat? I don't know if it's common there [Korea] umm but. . .[muffled sound]

Jaemin: I heard the situation was really complicated, because it's not borrowing ideas and using citations. It only has one answer to the problem.

Dr. Kline: Okay. Mmmm. Other guys--you have anything to add? We want to hear everyone. Shinpill you were saying about the institution. Mark you want to help out? Anyone else? We all need to get on board.

Shinpill: (Silence. No students talk)

Mark: No comment. I'll talk to my lawyer. (student laughter)

Jason: I'm not sure if this is just a cultural issue. Well, maybe it is. But, aside from that if the institution—if they are going to borrow questions from the website at least make the effort not to duplicate it—spice it up a little, you know? So, it's not just the students who are responsible. I think everyone has to acknowledge that it wasn't just one person who was responsible.

Mandy: Huh. But technically that doesn't excuse them from getting caught though. And you're as guilty as them for justifying what they did. (Class observation, September 18, 2012)

In this academic discussion, Dr. Kline again introduced the cheating event into the class discussion to show other students, particularly Jaemin and Sungjoo, about the unethical nature of the event. While the instructor's initial goal was to link the cheating event to the curriculum theme of individualism vs. collectivism in ethics, the direction of the discussion became heavily focused on the incident itself (e.g., The important question is—is it okay to cheat?). By evoking the past cheating event the instructor builds on the female students' response in order to perhaps admonish the guilty Korean students' unethical behavior. Dr. Kline takes the issue further by insinuating that prevention is just as important as acknowledging one's misbehavior: "Yes, and it's also about prevention. Do you all understand? You have to realize that prevention is just as important as acknowledging the misbehavior." While it may be too early to make any

conclusions, the dialogue shows how the instructor may be implicitly teaching the Korean students the importance of preventing similar “unethical” incidents (e.g. “cheating” event) in the future. As the dialogue continues, Shinpill, in defense of his Korean peers, claims that the incident should not only be perceived as an individual or group responsibility, but that greater responsibility should also be placed on the institution. Jason elaborates on Shinpill’s argument and the dialogue thereafter is centered on the topic of individual and institutional responsibility as Jason and Mandy lead the topic.

These and similar classroom observations from September to December reinforced the local identification of the American female students as ethical citizens in the classroom “society” and the Korean students as “unethical” or “ethically questionable.” Thus, the classroom discourse exemplified how the Korean students were at times ethnically stigmatized as “outcasts” in the classroom “society.” Gender also played a role in this stigmatization. Because some of the American male students often sided with the Korean male students, they too were at times perceived as “unethical” by the female participants, however, to a lesser degree than the Korean participants (see last few lines of the conversation between Mark, Jason and Mandy).

Given the socio-historical realities of moral and ethical dispositions in Korean society, the interpretation of Dr. Kline and the American female students’ behavior toward the Korean male students in the classroom discussion becomes more plausible. While the female students and the instructor may not clearly understand the socially informed ethical dispositions of Koreans, the instructor implied that cultural difference indeed comes into play: “I don’t know if it’s common there [in Korea]. . . .” In light of this, from a macro perspective, Jaemin and his Korean colleagues were at risk of being identified with respect to a specific cultural image in which individual responsibility takes less precedence over communal responsibility. From a

micro perspective, the interdiscursive appropriation of the cheating incident for the classroom discussion helped reinforce the “unethical” image of the Korean students in the ethics class.

In sum, by the middle of the semester, Dr. Kline and a few American female students routinely identified the Korean students as “unethical” and the American female students as being more ethical compared to all the other students. These presuppositions about one’s ethnic background became a notable category of identity, which became an available resource to frame students’ identities. In addition to ethnic stereotypes, there were gender stereotypes that identified the American male students who sided with the Korean students as menacing. According to a group of male students who actively participated in the class discussions, this gender stereotype was unpleasant for them; however they often sat in the back of the room in silence unless directly spoken to or when participating in the discussions (Jason, Mark, and Dave. Group informal conversation, October 23, 2012). As described by Moje (2000), Willis (2001) and others, such lack of participation in the subject matter need not be interpreted negatively, as lack of intelligence or as a refusal to act. Instead, silence and resistance can be sensible attempts to claim an alternative identity (e.g. mediator) in a hostile setting. For example, when Jaemin and Shinpill were in a predicament, Mark and Jason took on a role similar to a language broker, mediating between the Korean participants and the rest of the class.

Unlike the American male participants, the Korean male participants were in a more complex position. Because they were positioned as “unethical” students and thus as “outcasts” in the classroom, many of them attempted to reestablish their image as “good” students by working hard on the written assignments. I found it interesting that a handful of the Korean male participants struggled between these two images. Below, Jaemin briefly notes on this constant struggle:

Every time she calls on me, I get flustered. I feel like I become this strange person. Maybe she makes me feel that way or it could be just be my own feelings [. . .] I don't want to look like a bad person, but how can I prove myself? [. . .] I hope that getting good feedback on our reflection papers will prove that we aren't borrowing ideas wrongfully[. . .] I use the framework and reflect on the cases, and I get average score of around 13 [out of 15]. I feel I could do better, but I need to figure out what the expectation are [. . .]. I hope this average is good enough because grades are important for my future. [originally in English] (Jaemin, Individual interview, October 29, 2012)

Jaemin's response illustrates the importance of reestablishing a "good" student image, which was also a common thread in many of Sungjoo and Shinpill's interview responses (Shinpill and Sungjoo group interviews. October 30, November 11, November 14, 2012). As seen in Jaemin's particular response, one means to reestablish this image was to alter his voice to fit the expected written discourse of the ethics reflection papers (e.g., "I use the framework and reflect on the cases, and I get average score of around 13"). Shinpill responded in a similar manner in which he claimed that the framework was a useful guide in getting good grades, yet it also forced him to adhere to the instructor's ethical expectations even when he didn't completely agree to them (Shinpill, individual interview, October 30, 2012). On a similar note, Sungjoo responded, "We have to make decisions that work best for everyone. But I also don't want to give the impression that Korean people always make bad decisions. It's not good for my career and everyone's career [서로에게 이익이 되면 좋죠. 그렇다고 우리가 컨닝하는 걸로 알려져 있고 싶지 않거든요. 괜히 몇 명의 학생들 때문에 우리의 이미지까지 안 좋아지면 앞으로도 우리 모두 커리어도 영향을 미치거든요 . . .] (Sungjoo, informal interview, October 30, 2012). Based on the interviews, Jaemin, Shinpill, and Sungjoo indicated that reestablishing themselves as "good" students, who were studious and didn't stir problems in the class, became more important for their group identity and for their future careers. Yet, this was not an easy task for the students

during the class discussions in which their “good” student identity was being challenged by a few female students.

Theme: Individualism vs. collectivism and conflicting loyalty. By the end of the semester, a handful of female students were taking charge of the class discussions and at times taking on the instructor’s role. For example, on November 06 during one of the class discussions on individualism and collectivism, Mindy and Leslie took over the class discussion before Dr. Kline could further elaborate on that day’s case scenario. The case scenario was about a group of employees in a company illegally borrowing ideas from another company. The scenario asked what you as a group member would do if the group requested that everyone keep this “misdeed” a secret. In this segment of the class discussion, Mindy and Leslie directly target the Korean students before other students could participate in the discussion.

Dr. Kline: What is the issue here then? Anyone? (interrupted)

Mindy: Does anyone believe this is a collective issue? Some people may think-

Leslie: Yeah. Would you guys report the group?

Jaemin: It depends. It can also be an individual responsibility, but you also have to consider how it will affect the group. I think it’s complicated.

Mindy: Ummm...In Korea it would be seen as a collective issue, and not something that you would decide on your own, right?

Shinpill: No. In this case, maybe both individual and collective. It’s not easy decision.

Leslie: Why is it both now? I’m a little confused.

Shinpill: It [‘s] not cultural perspective but situation is different here.

Leslie: But, then would you view the situation as an ethical issue? (looks at Dr. Kline)

Just curious...

Shinpill: Yes. It can be seen as ethical issue. They borrow idea with no permission. So, first it become a dilemma for me, and if I report group it will become collective issue.

But it depend[s] on my individual decision and situation. So- (background noise)

Mindy: Oh. Gotcha. It is an issue then.

Dr. Kline: Ok. Shinpill does have a point. This connects to questions number five--We need to ask ourselves what options we have and who will be affected.

Shinpill: Everyone is affected. It cannot be question of who but how we get affect[ed].

(Class observation, November 6, 2012)

In the first few lines of this conversation, Mindy's response is layered with another question. Her question reflects a distinctive mid-high-mid intonation contour (the same as one would find with "You can't seriously believe this to be a collective issue"). Another female student, Leslie, echoes her. Before the Korean participants can elaborate on their thoughts about the case scenario, the female students lead the class discussion with their ongoing evaluative inquiry about the Korean students' ethical perspective. What is noticeable in this segment is the fact that Leslie and Mindy are the ones reconfirming the negative image of the Korean participants by interdiscursively appropriating the image of the "unethical" students into the current class discussion, and they do so in a more direct manner than seen in the previous class discussions. In many examples like this throughout the academic two quarters, the female students took advantage of the local categories of ethical American students and "unethical" Korean students. Still, many of the Korean participants did manage to contribute in ways Dr. Kline recognized as valuable in terms of their insightful analysis. This is briefly illustrated in a segment of my interview with Dr. Kline. I began with an open-ended question about the progress of the Korean students' participation in the class. She responded:

Oh, you know. They're good students--they're just learning--learning how to approach the issues-- you saw the framework--that's what we use. And you noticed how they're able to respond to those girls' questions? It's very interesting--very interesting comments [. . .] Well we may have different opinions about those scenarios, but we're also learning from them. Well, I'm learning something [. . .]. (Dr. Kline, Individual interview, October 26, 2012)

Although as illustrated in the class discussions thus far, Dr. Kline sometimes joined the female students in playful banter with the Korean students, she nonetheless continued to value their “interesting comments” in response to the case scenarios. At times the Korean participants had to struggle against some of the female students’ questions, but many of them often managed to participate successfully even if their responses did not always conform to the female students’ and Dr. Kline’s “ethical” expectations.

Conclusion: Learning Ethics and Identity

The Korean students’ identity in this classroom was established over several months in the two academic quarters. A more thorough account of the focal students’ identity construction would require more detailed description of the recurring speech events, like more academic arguments in the class discussions. However, this would be beyond the scope of this chapter. What were significant in the learning events in the ethics course were the ways in which Shinpill, Jaemin and Sungjoo challenged homogeneous sets of beliefs and practices about ethics in the particular space of the ethics classroom. For example, in the last class discussion (Theme: Individualism vs. collectivism and conflicting loyalty), Shinpill challenged a group of female students’ notions of social responsibility by using arguments not only for academic aims but also to disrupt the teacher-sanctioned notions of ethics. In doing so, he was also attempting to redeem the Korean participants’ image in the classroom. Sometimes the Korean students managed to establish their “good” student image, but the female students continued to challenge them to

confront the tension between the two aspects of their local identity (good student vs. unethical student). However, considering the local “cheating” event, it was challenging for the Korean participants to build new identities beyond the “unethical” persona in the ethics classroom.

As the focal students were working hard on their social identity through the class discussions, they were also engaging with the learning of ethics as they participated in class discussions on the themes: (a) identifying ethical dilemmas in the work place, (b) social responsibility, (c) individualism vs. collectivism in ethical decisions, and (d) individualism vs. collectivism and conflicting loyalty. By juxtaposing a prior event (“cheating” event) with the current ethics class interaction, the chapter illustrated a few examples of how the process of identity construction and academic learning of ethics are intertwined in a complex manner as the focal students reworked their understanding of ethics and at the same time attempted to redeem their image as “good” students.

After the weight of the “cheating” incident slowly subsided as the students and instructors settled into the second academic quarter, the focal Korean students felt the need to redeem their image of the “model international” student. As Joonsung had noted in one of our later interviews, “we have to find a way to make up for what was lost. I don’t want to leave behind a bad impression for the new Korean students next year. I feel this is a responsibility we need to take on for our new Korean students.”[것 다시 되찾아야죠. 한국인의 이미지도 다시 살려줘야 되지 않을까 싶어요- 특히 내년 후배들을 생각해서라도. . .] (Joonsung, interview, October 12, 2012). To redeem their model student image, Shinpill, Sungjoo, and Joonsung, built an alternative space imbued with power relations as they attempted to establish a social hierarchy in their second quarter peer study group. That is, they attempted to redeem and re-appropriate the authority of the “model international” students in the context of

the peer study group as they participated in the peer group literacy activities (e.g. sharing ideas and allocating members' roles for written assignments, and preparing for group presentations).

Chapter 6

Korean Students and Peer Social Hierarchy

[You need] some kind of talent and knowledge (points to his head)--you have to know [the] material and homework. And you [have to] know how to do homework quickly. You may be[come] successful."

(Tomo, post-observation interview, October 17, 2012)

At the beginning of the first academic quarter students were assigned by the program to groups of four or five as part of the marketing course curriculum. Outside the confinements of the classroom, members worked on group papers and presentations, which constituted thirty percent of their final grade. With the start of the second quarter, students now had the freedom to choose their own groups. This recruiting process was political in nature, and students stood in the hallway after class to discuss whom they preferred and the rationale for their choices. This political atmosphere continued in the literacy practices (e.g. sharing ideas orally and in written form for group projects and presentations, and allocating members' roles for each assignment) of the peer groups until the end of the second quarter. It was here that I was able to see the different kinds of social networks (Milroy, 1987) at play as students positioned themselves and others in particular ways.

In this chapter, I specifically examine how a group of Korean (model international) students self-categorize themselves as figures of authority and build their version of a peer social hierarchy within and across five peer study groups. In doing so, I also attempt to understand how they construct notions of otherness and of difference as it relates to the notion of academic success. In order to get a closer understanding of how the peer social hierarchy inform the Korean students' individual and collective identity in and across the five study groups, I follow Shinpill, Sungjoo, Joonsung and Chris. However, I pay particular attention to Joonsung and

Chris's cases because their interaction with their peer members show how they claim a very distinct identity as they rework the meaning of academic success. I begin by introducing the five peer groups.

Introducing the Peer Groups and Academic Literacy Activity

It is 4:00 pm on October 17. There are several groups of students in the business building lounge working on assignments or discussing ideas for their group project. I sit with a group of five students: Joonsung and Sungjoo, Justin, a white American student, and Tomo, a Japanese student. The leader of the group, Shinpill, is late for the group meeting, and Joonsung informs me that Shinpill will be joining the group around 4:40. Students are working on a marketing class assignment where they had to come up with a logo for a new cold medicine. Joonsung leads the group discussion on ideas for the product logo, commenting that the logo should emphasize the natural ingredients in the product. He suggests a focus on honey. He takes out a notebook and begins to draw his idea as Tomo and Justin watch. Sitting across from Joonsung, Justin is also sketching ideas for the logo. He draws a picture of a medicine bottle and has written down the word, "multi-symptom" (see Figure 6.1). He shows this to the rest of the group as Joonsung finishes up his drawing. Joonsung and Justin begin a discussion around their logos. Tension between the two escalates when Joonsung claims that Justin's idea "lack[ed] originality."

Joonsung: Ummm. How is that different from other multi-symptom cold medicine[s]?

Justin: It doesn't have to be different. I think all cold medicines are pretty much the same. They all treat multi-symptoms, so if we want to situate our product in that market, we can't just emphasize honey.

Joonsung: It lack[s] originality. All medicine is multi-symptom so that is a default, so we don't need to mention it again in the logo. People want natural ingredients--safe for your health. We need to differentiate ourselves from the market.

Justin: I get it. But, it's a cold medicine. It's not an organic food we're selling here.

Shinpill walks in during a conversational lull. He listens to the discussion for the next ten minutes as Joonsung and Justin make claims to their ideas. When Justin asks Shinpill to intervene in the discussion, Shinpill says, "Why can't you use both?" Below is Shinpill's response to the two:

Shinpill: I think Joonsung had [has a] good idea to emphasize natural ingredient, because all the cold medicine these days is multi-symptom. But if we have natural ingredients, we can differentiate our product from so many similar ones.

Justin: Either way, people want to get over their cold and when you're sick at the store consumers are not looking for natural ingredients--they're gonna grab the first medicine that will work.

Shinpill: But all cold medicine[s] work. We have to go beyond and add something to stimulate customer's interest, but that does not mean we have to choose one over [the] other. We can decide to add both- multi-symptom, but with natural ingredients.

(Peer Group Observation, October 17, 2012)

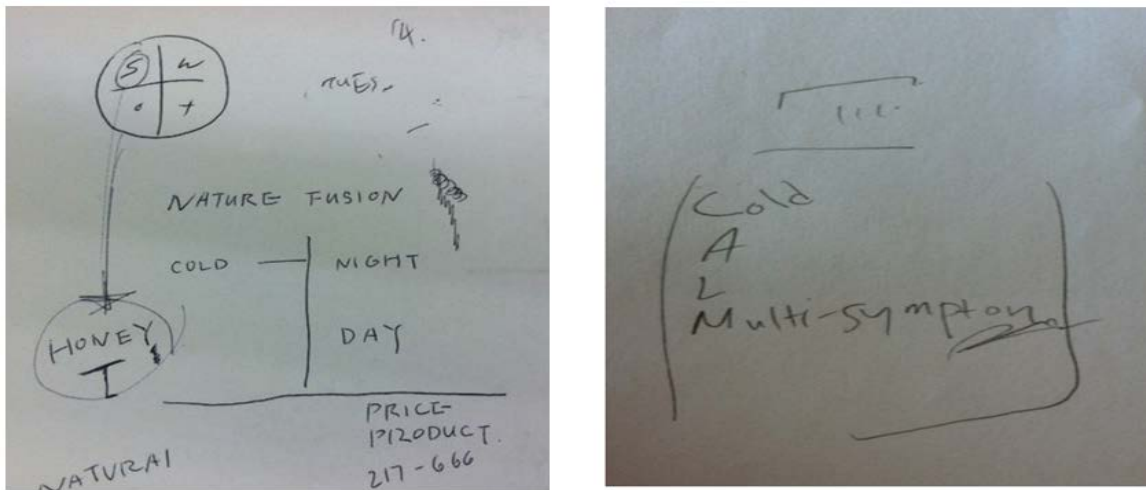


Figure 6. 1. Justin and Joonsung sketch out ideas for the cold medicine logo.

Justin sighs and suggests a group break. After students leave for break, I begin to organize my notes from the group observation when Shinpill walks up to me to talk about the incident:

I see you're taking notes. You saw. He's [Justin] kind of like a free rider. He slows the group down because he doesn't have any knowledge in marketing. I mean our group, like the three of us, we know what we are doing and we're known to do well in the assignments [pause]. But, I guess you can't expect everyone to be like yourself. Sorry for venting. I was just a little frustrated that's all. Sometimes, I just have to humor him. It's like talking to Chris. You should watch him [Chris] in his group. (Shinpill, informal conversation, October 17, 2012)

[정리하시네요. 방금 대화 보셨나요? 어떻게 보면 개가 정말 free rider[무임승객]이죠. 개 때문에 진도가 안 나가요. 이 친구는 아는 것 하나도 없어요. 그렇다고 똑똑한 친구도 아니거든요. 우리 셋은 사실 이 숙제를 어떤 방식으로 접근해야 하는지 잘 알거든요. 생각해 보면 다 똑똑할 수는 없겠지요...제가 답답해서 선생님에게 하소연 했네요... 그냥 맞장구 칠 수 밖에 없는 것 같아요. 어떻게 보면 Chris란 친구와 조금 비슷하죠. 보시면 아실거예요- Justin 보다 더 답답한 치].

When we look back to the group conversation and Shinpill's comment about Justin's role in the group, we notice that not every member has an equal footing in the group conversation. For example, Shinpill implies that Joonsung, Sungjoo and himself have more weight in their symbolic capital as members of the group, because apparently, according to Shinpill, the three

knew “what [they] are doing and [. . .] known to do well in the assignments” (Shinpill, informal conversation, October 17, 2012). I assumed that this symbolic capital that Shinpill was referring to was framed by one’s academic ability. Attempting to get a clearer understanding of what counted as symbolic capital I asked one group member, Tomo, a Japanese student. My initial question began by asking him the kinds of expectations members had of one another. He summarized it one succinct response: “[You need] some kind of talent and knowledge (points to his head). You have to know [the] material and homework. And you [have to] know how to do homework quickly. You may be[come] successful.” (Tomo, post-observation interview, October 17, 2012)

From Tomo and Shinpill’s response and my observations of the group interaction, what counts as symbolic capital and how it informs one’s identity and positioning in group settings appeared to be a significant theme among students, particularly among the three Korean students (Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo). As we shall see, while group discussions often centered on the marketing course projects, issues of legitimacy, power and identity also became enmeshed in group conversations.

Having said this, this chapter follows eight Korean students (Shinpill, Joonsung, Sungjoo, Junn, Jaemin, Bona, Mina and Chris) in their respective peer groups (five peer groups in total); however, I place more focus on three model Korean students, Shinpill, Joonsung, and Sungjoo, because these students were most vocal about their self-representation in the social hierarchy they had constructed for themselves. As I examine their version of this social hierarchy, I also look into how they construct definitions of otherness and of difference based on valued knowledge, drawing on ideologies for what counts as symbolic capital. While I include non-

Korean students' interactions in their peer group, I consider them only when relevant to my understanding of the focal Korean students.

Table 6.1

Korean Students' Second Quarter Peer Study Group

Study Group 1	Study Group 2	Study Group 3	Study Group 4	Study Group 5
Shinpill	Marta	Mike	Mina	Chris
Joonsung	Junn	Derek	John	Jason
Sungjoo	Leslie	Jaemin	Ruting	David
Tomo	Jake	Liting	Ali	Mark
Justin	Padida	Mohammed	Bona	Zhikun

As I follow the focal Korean students in their second quarter peer group, I feature Joonsung, one of the Korean “model” international students, because his case illustrates the unique ways a Korean student accrues social capital both through his knowledge skills and through his unique claim to a “white” identity. I also feature Chris, a half-Korean student who struggles to position himself as a legitimate member of his group and among his Korean colleagues. Their cases highlight two students who claim distinct identities that inform their status in the peer group social hierarchy.

As I embark on this journey, I find it important to get a better picture of the ways that certain focal Korean students' (Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo) evaluate and make sense of certain forms of symbolic capital in relation to their group literacy activities and their identities as model students. In the next two sections, I discuss Bourdieu's notion of capital, and social reproduction and the Korean cultural notions of success and knowledge to understand certain forms of symbolic capital are formed in these study groups.

Table 6.2

Overview of Focal Korean Participant Profile

Category	Name	Age	Ethnicity	Undergraduate major	Peer social hierarchy (self-perception)
Focal Students	Shinpill	32	Korean	Marketing-Finance	Top
	Sungjoo	33	Korean	Finance	Top
	Joonsung	31	Korean	Finance	Middle
	Jaemin	33	Korean	Engineering	Middle
	Chris	28	American nationality (bi-racial Korean-American)	Environmental studies	Middle

Social Spaces, Capital and Reproduction

With a diverse student population in the MBA program and where “fundamental differences” themselves are often open for negotiation, charting the social space of student groups in the second academic quarter required close attention to differences as they were defined by the group of model Korean students. To accomplish this, I look into notions of capital, reproductions, and how identity is performed.

For the majority of this chapter, I use the term symbolic capital loosely yet purposefully from a Bourdieusian perspective. There were various exchanges between students in the peer group dynamic which indicated value that was not seen purely in terms of “material goods” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 88). In many cases students’ current symbolic capital had to do with certain kinds of valued knowledge and even at times with their parents’ economic capital and their affiliation choices with other colleagues. Yet the students’ representational rights that they received or claimed were mostly symbolic and related more to their legitimacy as a group

member and their reputation within it (rather than the actual accrual of resources). In the peer groups and the friendship circles I examined how the kinds and weight of capital differed slightly from group to group. But recognized capital commonly included one or more of these resources: specific knowledge skills, English language abilities, and particular ethnic and cultural affiliations.

The main focal Korean students in this chapter derived notions of what counted as symbolic capital from two sources. First, it derived from their Korean cultural/historical disposition in the academia whereby knowledge and intellect are important economic and cultural resources for Korean students' success in the job market (Ko Ha Mok, 2013). Second, social capital was also developed by the current groups' unconscious and collective understanding of their purpose and agenda. Thus, my analysis largely takes place at these two intersections: the cultural/historical and the peers' collective practices. As we shall see, the Korean students' identity and affiliation choices to certain individuals were mediated by both their histories/dispositions and their sense of what kinds of identity claims were permitted to them. To examine how this social hierarchy informs students' membership in a group, I first examine the meaning of the social hierarchy and how it informs students' identity.

Peer Social Hierarchy: "What's Your Worth?"

Group members had varying opinions about their peer members, but many agreed that knowledge and work background in the field of marketing was an important resource for "getting the assignments done." In late October, after observing Junn's group discussion, I approached Marta for an interview because I assumed she was the leader of the group based on my observations. I also had prior knowledge of her status in the marketing course for receiving the highest grade average in the first quarter (this was announced in class by the instructor himself).

Below, in the middle of our conversation, Joonsung, a close friend of Marta, saw us conversing and decided to join the conversation:

Marta: Yeah. Dr. Johnson made me a mini celebrity after making that announcement. I guess it gives me more options to choose which group.

Researcher: In your group, do you have a specific role? I noticed that you led most of the discussion.

Marta: Oh (smiles). Well. I have background in marketing and worked in Sears for a while. So, it helps a lot with the marketing assignments. I dunno-- I just ended up doing a lot of the organizing and so far no one has said anything negative about it. So yeah I guess (conversation interrupted)-

Joonsung: (joins the conversation) Hi, you meet with another group leader (smiles).

Researcher: We were talking about Marta's role in her group. What about you? How is your new group?

Joonsung: Good. Justin is new member, but everything is good. Our group has the three brothers [Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo] again, so we most of the time lead the group together. And we finish everything fast. Eh--So, so far everything is ok [pause]. (looks at Marta) Too bad you can't be in our group. We would be the power group (laughter). But, your group need[s] you.

Marta: You don't need me. Come on, you're the finance guy.

(Group Interview, October 30, 2012)

I watched Marta and Joonsung's playful banter as they talked about one another's role in their peer group. While the interview became an informal conversation between the two, their conversation showed that those with more business related knowledge and work background had

more agency to choose which group to join. In this conversation, Marta and Joonsung positioned themselves as valuable students because of their expertise in marketing (for Marta) and finance (for Joonsung). This is also seen when each legitimized the other's worth in the group setting: Joonsung noted that the addition of Marta in his group collectively gave their group more power (e.g., "the power group"). In response to this, Marta reconfirmed Joonsung's agency in his peer group by reminding him of his expert knowledge in finance: "You're the finance guy."

After Marta left to attend class, I used this opportunity to ask Joonsung to explain how the social hierarchy came to be. He called Shinpill and Sungjoo to join the conversation, because he wanted to make sure that his explanations were accurate. Fifteen minutes later, I was sitting with Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung at the business college café. Jaemin had also decided to join. Shinpill started to take notes in Korean as he explained to me the structure of the peer groups (see Appendix C). The main point of his explanation was that business knowledge skills and related work experience ranked at the top of the social hierarchy. While native-like English communication skill was a valuable resource, it had less weight in its value compared to knowledge skills. However, the juxtaposition of English and relevant knowledge was perceived to be the highest valued resource; thus, students who are proficient in both were considered among their peers to have more weight in their capital (Observation notes, October 30, 2012). When I asked whether other skills beyond relevant knowledge had any value, Shinpill noted that those who did secretarial work or had other "soft" skills in managing/scheduling group meetings ranked in the lower half of the social hierarchy [그룹 미팅 스케줄 잡아주는 비서 역할이라도 할 수 있으면 좋죠. 그런 친구들이 필요하죠. 근데 그닥 조원으로써 가치가 크지는 않죠] (Observation notes, October 30, 2012)

After listening to Shinpill, I sketched out the weight of each element of social capital, and mapped out a general hierarchical structure on the spot. I confirmed this drawing with Shinpill, Sungjoo, Joonsung and Jaemin to see if it best reflected their version of the social hierarchy. While Jaemin had little to say, Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo believed that my drawing was a general framework of what the social hierarchy might look like. Figure 6.2 represents this social hierarchy. While there were subtle differences to the degree of its importance, the majority of the Korean participants (Bona, Mina, Jaemin, and the three focal Korean students) agreed that intellect and knowledge were important factors for differentiating themselves with their English native speaking group members (Group interview, November 12, 2012). That is, the ideology of evaluating one's worth through the performance of his or her intellectual abilities appeared to be a salient feature of their identity in the peer group.

Moreover, for the Korean participants, this identity included an added element to determine their position in the peer group. Their identity was also based on their own sense of how others might perceive them because of their limited English communication skills. For example, Joonsung noted that he feared his group members might think of him as “not very intelligent” because his “English sounds illogical” (Joonsung, individual interview, November 15, 2012). In some cases, however, others without exceptional English skills were able to position themselves as valuable members by offering their “soft” skills to the group. Jaemin reported that his Engineering background gave him the skills to quickly organize complex numbers into graphs. He also noted that he received positive feedback for his organizational skills, which helped him to construct an identity as an important member (Jaemin, post peer-group observation interview, November 16, 2012).

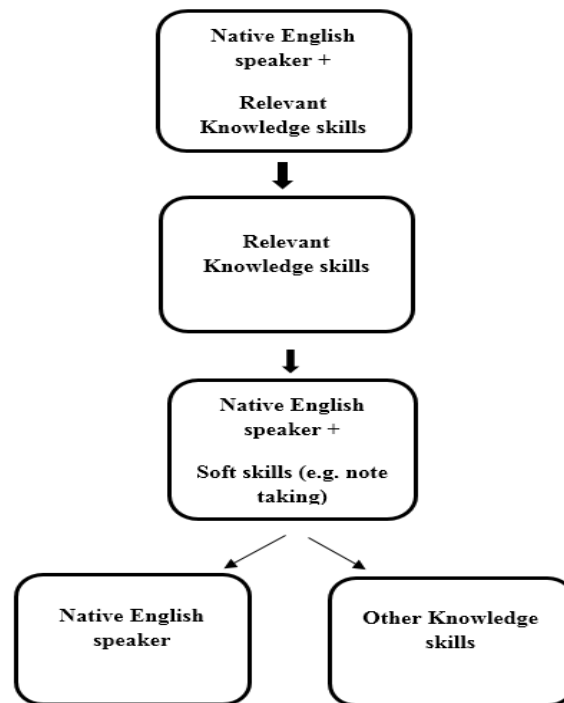


Figure 6.2. The three Korean students' version of the peer social hierarchy

If Figure 6.2 represents the three Korean students' framework for evaluating the legitimacy of themselves and their peers, not everyone fully agreed to this social hierarchy when I showed them the drawing. One of the most notable differences had to do with English communication skills. While some native English speakers believed that English fluency alone was almost on par with valued knowledge skills, non-native speakers thought otherwise. I looked particularly into Jaemin and his peer group to get a better understanding of this response. There were two reasons I looked into Jaemin's group: 1) their group's responses represented a common pattern of other peer groups' responses about the differing viewpoints between the value of English and certain forms of field knowledge, and 2) their peer group was quite vocal in their responses, which I believed would best capture and highlight this common pattern of response of other groups.

Jaemin and peer group's self- representation. In early November, after observing Jaemin's peer group, I gave him a copy of the drawing. Students huddled around to see the drawing. Jaemin explained the drawing as I observed from the outskirt.

Jaemin: I find this pretty accurate, don't you think (looks to Derek)?

Derek: It's really raw. Whoever came up with this is really--wait--English is important. No offense to you guys, but if we can't understand what you're saying it really doesn't matter if you have knowledge

Liting: I agree. But if you are fluent but don't have anything important to say, then that is also wasting our time too. I think both are important.

Jaemin: Eh. Maybe knowledge is higher. Knowledge can make up for mediocre level English.

Derek: Well, that's true. But, you can always learn the materials, but with language if you can't communicate your ideas, it just slows everything down.

Jaemin: (Jaemin notices "soft skills" on the map) Soft skills--I think that's important too--like what Zhikun and I have. You help organize the meetings, so I guess that's called soft skills...

Liting: Eh. Not that important. Do[Does] this mean I am at bottom (half-joking response)

Derek: Huh. Interesting. Maybe I'm in the upper middle. No one has really thought of mapping this out. Harsh. But yeah interesting (looks over the drawing).

(Group observation, November 15, 2012)

Derek, Liting, and Jaemin made different judgments on the drawing with Derek noting that the mapping of the social hierarchy was "harsh," yet at the same time "interesting." Students seemed quite curious about their own position in this hierarchy. For example, Liting in a playful manner

positioned herself near the bottom of the hierarchy because of her “soft” skills. On the other hand, Derek positioned himself near the upper middle tier of the social hierarchy as he noted that English was just as important as knowledge.

Sharing this map with the students was not to endorse this social hierarchy, but to see how students positioned themselves in (or resisted) this hierarchy. What is worth noting in the conversation is the different perceptions of the weight of English communication skills compared to other skills. English native speaker, Derek, positioned English as an equally valuable resource with relevant knowledge skills, while Jaemin, who speaks and writes in English with relative ease, still claimed, “knowledge can make up for mediocre level English” (Group observation, November 15, 2012)

This analysis of the students’ understanding of symbolic capital showed me that in addition to the given social context of the peer group, students’ individual skills and histories informed how they weighed the value of certain capital, and in turn how they represented themselves and others. This takes us into the Korean students’ identity politics: how they represented themselves and how others might perceive them in this framework. However, in some cases a student may perform an alternative identity that goes beyond the boundaries of the social hierarchy framework. I began by following Chris because his case illustrated an example of how identity is “always within representation” (Hall, 1997, p. 49), and how his unique identity claim to German ancestry showed how certain cultural identity becomes part of a struggle to claim a distinct identity. I also included instances of Joonsung’s story in the later section of this chapter as I discuss his position in the friendship circles.

The Right to Name and Label: “You are not part German”

Chris, a 28 year-old half Korean and Caucasian student, was born and raised in California. What is important to note at the outset is that Chris held an American nationality and like many individuals from multi-cultural and ethnic backgrounds, he positioned himself as the modern-day American. Although he has a Korean mother and spoke Korean, he felt more comfortable speaking in English, having attended school in the U.S. Nevertheless, rather than identifying with a Korean or an American identity, he strongly held a German identity (he was one-fourth German from his father’s side). His main goal for attending the MBA program was to use his MBA degree to search for more job opportunities in marketing. As the following example will illustrate, Chris’ personal history as a bi-racial student along with his struggle in the first quarter to find a sense of belonging in the MBA peer community influenced the way he negotiated his identity in the new group.

Chris was taking four core courses like the rest of the students in the second academic quarter. It was interesting that he had different experiences in these courses despite their apparent similarities in format, class size and student numbers. The differences involved the instructor and the content of the course. For example, in the first academic quarter Business Ethics course he participated actively and meaningfully, but in the marketing and finance course he could not. This difference was closely related to the contrasting positions he occupied in the courses. In the Ethics course, he seemed to have been constructed as a valued member; his personal experience, knowledge about the content, and unique perspective from being exposed to both Korean and American culture at home had currency. Moreover, the ethics professor seemed to appreciate his contributions. The instructor once told Chris that his contributions were “very intriguing and added a great deal to the experience of the students” (Chris, weekly report, October 16, 2012).

He also helped the international students in class by providing cultural background information on American ethics, which in turn helped Chris to understand and participate in group discussions in the class. However, when it came to peer study group discussions of core courses, such as the marketing course, Chris was uneasy because he felt that he didn't have enough knowledge in the field to make contributions (Chris, weekly report, October 16, 2012). I observed this uneasiness as reflected in the peer group meetings outside the classroom. He noted that his group members were not so "accepting." Below, Chris summarizes his experience:

The Ethics course was fun and I learned a lot. I also knew the content well enough to help the international students. But the study group it's less structured, so it's a little informal in nature[. . .]. Marketing isn't my forte, so it makes it harder to have a say in the group [. . .]. It's stressful to do all the work, and no one is really listening. You don't feel accepted, so *I feel like I've lost my presence* [. . .]. (Chris, weekly report, October 20, originally in English)

The last sentence of his comment was important because it reveals that his subjectivity, in this case a negative one, was central to his experience in the peer group. In contrast to the structured group discussions in the classroom, participation in the peer study groups was also difficult for many other students because it was an informal space where students often and unconsciously jockeyed for a specific position. For example, Joonsung struggled to communicate in English when other group members talked all at once (Joonsung, interview, October 30, 2012). However, Joonsung noted that his marketing background knowledge and his "model international" student status gave him more opportunities to speak in the group discussion and to be heard by his group members (refer to Peer Group Observation, October 17, 2012).

What made Chris's story compelling is that he actively resisted his marginality within the peer group and attempted to reposition himself by claiming a unique identity that felt true to him (German identity). As someone who had always questioned and struggled with his ethnic

identity, Chris felt that it was “not only natural but important to claim [his] an identity [he] felt right about” (Chris, Interview, October 1, 2012). Chris first vocally expressed this need in his peer group in one of the group meetings. In the following example, his group members, along with Shinpill and Sungjoo, were discussing their grades for one of the marketing assignments. Here Chris found the opportunity to voice his German identity to the rest of the group members during a conversational lull:

Chris: Geez. I got a point deducted. I focused on Ireland’s market and the GAs were asking ‘why so much focus on Ireland?’ Didn’t Dr. Johnson say we needed to expand its sales internationally--compete with Heineken?

David: Maybe you were too focused. Why’d you write about Ireland?

Chris: Ireland is a culture where people actually drink.

Mark: Dude, you from Ireland or something? (looks over Chris’ shoulder to get a glimpse of Chris’ paper). Ireland, Ireland, Ireland that’s a lot.

Chris: Yo, I’m actually German--and I guess a quarter Irish (playfully response). More German than you think.

Mark: (changes subject) Hey Shinpill, don’t Koreans drink a lot of beer?

Shinpill: Yeah we do. Chris can tell us, he drinks a lot, remember (laughter)? Maybe some Korean blood [is in him] to drink alcohol (laughter)

Chris: (laughter) It’s probably my German blood craving it.

Mark: You’re half Korean too, right? Man, that’s cool. (changes subject) You guys wanna go get a drink Kangnam style? (places arm around Shinpill’s shoulder)

Shinpill: (Looks towards Chris) You know Kangnam style?

(Group observation, October 19, 2012)

Chris's claim on his German and Irish ancestry over his Korean one was notable here. I further examined Chris' identification with his German ancestry because this representational act may indicate resistance to his Korean ethnic identity, which he claimed "doesn't feel right" (Chris, background interview, September 20, 2012). Second, by claiming an identity that did not exist within the given social hierarchy (a hierarchy based on knowledge and skills), Chris may also be resisting the ideology behind the Korean students' social order in which group membership and legitimacy were generally defined and measured by one's intellectual properties.

In one of our e-mail communications about his view of the peer group structures, Chris noted that he did not agree with the knowledge-based hierarchical structure of the Korean students' version of social order because he told me that it restricted creativity from group members and demotivated student participation (Chris, e-mail communication, November 23, 2012). Chris noted, "I may not have the special skills like some people, but I don't identify with a specific role in the group. Groups work together, share ideas . . ." (Chris, individual interview, November 20, 2012). Chris also noted that group gatherings to "just talk" about ideas were not openly welcomed, particular in his own group. For instance, in our e-mail communication, Chris had spoken to one of his group members, Mark, about having weekly gatherings off-campus to share answers to the group assignments. Chris told me that Mark was not enthusiastic about sharing ideas because it could "slow down the group" (Chris, e-mail communication, November 21, 2012). Chris informed me that his group wanted to wait until David finished his part of the assignment so that everyone could check their answers based on David's answers (Chris, email communication, November 21, 2012).

These exchanges are an example of how students implicitly negotiated each other's roles, status and power in the group as they made reference to group members' knowledge skills. In

other words, Chris's comment about himself lacking *special skills* and Mark's dependence on David's *knowledge skills* (e.g. checking group answers based on David's answers) were glimpses into ways the ideology of the social hierarchy may strongly inform the students' understanding of power and status than we actually think.

This ideology was reflected by Mark, David, and even Shinpill as they reinforced their positions in the hierarchy at the cost of those marginalized in the group. For example, in post observation interviews with Chris's group members, I noticed Mark and Jason often using words such as 'idiosyncratic,' 'out of place,' 'unique,' and 'different,' when they referred to Chris's role in the group (Mark and Jason, group interview, November 27, 2012). David also noted, "He's [Chris] pretty unique. Well everyone's different. But not different in an interesting way. I have like the highest GMAT score. That is kinda different. . . ." (David, individual interview, November 22, 2012). In making such evaluative comments, David was reinforcing his position as an important member in the group while at the same time diminishing Chris' position.

However, this does not mean that Chris's position afforded him with no agency in the group, nor that he was the only student that negotiated his identity in the peer study group setting. Chris's case showed that although his marginal position did not seem to change easily, and he continued to have problems engaging in the group discussions, he coped with this situation by modifying his approach to the group discussions. Instead of trying to get fuller membership, he tried to place his own academic interests at the center of his learning efforts and pay more attention selectively. It was a form of nonparticipation (Norton, 2001; Wenger, 1998), but it was nevertheless a way of coping with and exercising his personal agency. In the following excerpt from a self-report, Chris summarized the transformation of his participation in the peer group discussions:

- 1) State of confusion: I don't think they want to meet up that often, but I went with the flow [. . .] I was still trying to figure out who took on what role [. . .] I wasn't sure what to think of the group. I didn't really speak [. . .] There was no rule, and no one talked about it, and they weren't very receptive to my ideas.
- 2) State of resistance: [. . .] After talking about what we were going to do, I saw that Mark only listened to David. I figured letting him do most of the calculations helped because we got perfect scores on the finance calculations.[. . .] I don't feel I have to prove myself in that way. [. . .] I use to raise other interesting topics. I prefer small talk. I told them about my parents and where I was from. I told them about my German family [. . .]I want to be true to who I am, and not play into this system.
- 3) State of realization: It's better to start the conversations and ask questions about the assignment. Then someone will respond and explain it to me. That way, I get to talk and other people can join [. . .] Even if no one answers, it's better to think of a topic people can relate to [. . .] I think one of the purposes of choosing our own group is to find people you connect with- not just at an intellectual level.[. . .] I'll just ask general questions about the assignments or other relevant topics so that I can learn from them. . . It is the way it is.[. . .]I wish we could get to know each other better beyond just doing the assignments, you know?

(Chris, weekly interview, November 02, November 15, November 30)

Chris's experience in the peer group reflected the peripheral role he played in it. When he found himself in a marginal position, he found alternative ways to participate as a member by initiating questions related to the group discussion topic, even though it appeared not to help change the power dynamics of the group in any obvious way (e.g. *It is the way it is*). It is important to interpret Chris's resistance contextually, especially in relation to his previous experience struggling to find a sense of belonging among his peers in the first quarter. If agency, according to a neo-Vygotskian approach, is a "relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large" (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 148) then Chris was able to fashion an alternative subject position to fulfill his immediate goal: to cope and exercise his personal agency.

In sum, whether Chris was actively asserting a German identity, denying any categorization associated with the given social order, or finding alternative subject positions to

participate in the group dynamic, what is clear is that Chris was engaged in representational acts, telling stories about himself and making identity claims. His and his peer member's evaluation of one another also showed how "difference" is understood and negotiated differently. As Bourdieu once noted, to speak of a social space it means that one cannot group just anyone with anyone while ignoring differences between them (Bourdieu, 1985). He used this idea to refer to larger social groups, using differences in economic and cultural capital to show how social space was affected and formed by various groups and their members (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 129). To some degree this held true in the social space of Chris's peer group as certain group members, such as David, interpreted "being different" differently from Chris.

If we briefly return to Chris' claim to his German identity, we notice that thus far this did not work well with his peers. What is interesting though is that Joonsung, who is ethnically Korean, often times claimed a "white"²⁰ identity when he was around Marta. Yet, his claim on a "white" identity did not bring about resistance from his peers. Having hung out with Joonsung regularly, Shinpill once told me that Joonsung dressed like a white fraternity boy when he was with Marta and her white friends, and noted that it was "different":

It's different. But as long as he doesn't affect our group, I'm okay with it. Besides, it's his choice who he hangs out with. But like I said, as long as he does the work, no one is going to bother him. Now, Chris is a different story. He has an interesting character. But he needs to learn to be part of the group [. . .]. (Shinpill, group interview with Tomo, October 30, 2012)

[많이 이상하죠. 이상하지만 그냥 남드라다고 생각하는거죠. 우리 모임에 큰 해가 되지 않은 한 저는 크게 신경 쓰지 않아요. 그리고 그렇게 행동하는 것 자기 선택이라 무슨 말하기가 좀 그래요. 우리 모임에 할일만 제대로 하면 돼요. 그데 Chris이랑 상황이 많이 다르죠. 그 친구는 그룹 모임에 제대로 참석도 안 하면서 혼자 튀잖아요. 제가 봤을 때는 그닥 될만한 자격 없는 것 같은데. . .]

²⁰ The meaning of "white" for Joonsung also indexed the privileged American lifestyle that Joonsung aspired to. (Joonsung, informal conversation, September, 13, 2012).

As illustrated in this brief interview in late October, Chris's German identity claim is questioned by his peers, while Joonsung's claim on a "white" identity, indicated in his close affiliation to his white colleagues and his attire, seemed less of an issue to his fellow peers. What this showed is that the legitimacy of a member's identity appears to be contingent on one's position in the social hierarchy. In other words, students such as Joonsung, Shinpill, Sungjoo and Marta, who were positioned at the top of the social hierarchy by one another (see Table 6.2.), had more agency to jockey for a position in their peer group with little resistance from their peers. Students like Chris, who were positioned near the bottom of the hierarchy, had little agency to such freedom. Evidence from the interviews implied that his position in the social hierarchy had changed little since the beginning of the semester despite his resistance to it.

The examination of Chris and Joonsung's identification required me to look into and explain how the Korean participants continued to use identity politics to operate, maintain, and regulate the social hierarchy. I began to see that this work was done mostly in the friendship circles within and across the peer groups. The friendship groups allowed me to see how some identities were accepted more than others and how their identities informed the three Korean students' affiliation choices.

Friendship Circles

A specific social world can be talked about and constructed in different ways based on who does the interpretation and how they interpret it. The social world of the friendship circle was interpreted mainly by the three (Shinpill, Joonsung, Sungjoo) of the five Korean participants. I observed each of the five peer groups on- and off-campus two to three times a week as the Korean participants informed me when and where the gatherings took place. Through them, I was introduced to other students and was able to interview half of the students

in each group (focal participants' friends and friends of friends), collect notes from the student interviews, and map out the friendship groupings. I checked the validity of these maps with at least one person from each friendship circle. I used one such map (Figure 6.3.) below to explain them.

My analysis of these circles of friends is based in part on my understanding of the context-dependent weight and volume of symbolic capital that students bring to social relationships. In and among the friendship groups, where notions of difference were constructed around valued knowledge with other peers, students usually formed friendship groups with peers who held similar amounts and types of capital, and often times the dynamics of the friendship circles overlapped with the peer group circles. This made it difficult at times to differentiate the two; however, the space of the friendship circles was unique in that it highlighted how individuals interpreted the meaning of “difference” to include other social skills to evaluate their friends.

Differences were overtly valued among the peers in and among the friendship circles; however, they were still defined within the framework of the social hierarchy. And as noted before, those with more weight in their symbolic capital had more representational rights to label others and themselves. In other words, the “social rank and specific power” of the three Korean participants (as model international students) enabled them to weigh their own and others' social capital (in the form of ethnicity, social class, personalities, and so forth) in ways that benefited their own rankings in and among the friendship circles (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 112). As I examined the ways the three focal Korean participants interpreted the social world of the friendship groups, we must also consider identity, and be sure to “take account of the contribution that agents make toward constructing the view of the social world [. . .] by means of the work of representation”

(p. 727). If identity, according to Hall (1997), is within representation, the students' identity politics--how they value capital based on self-representations--also becomes important in their understanding of representation in the social world of their friendship circles.

Having said this, I began by mapping the friendship circles from the focal Korean students' perspective as well as from my own vantage point as an observer. Because of their combined social and symbolic capital and its weight in relation to that of other peers' capital in the marketing classroom, Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo had the "capacity to make entities exist in the explicit state, to publish, to make public (i.e., render objectified, visible, and even official) what had not previously attained objective and collective existence" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 729). In other words, they had the symbolic power, partially because of how they were structurally located in the marketing classroom in terms of their available capital, "to make groups by *making* the common sense, the explicit consensus, of the whole group" (p. 729).

The influence of the friendship circles was visible throughout the academic quarter, as much for the few students with no specific friends (Bona, Chris and sometimes Mina) as for those who were enmeshed in particular groups. The three Korean students' power base was undergirded by each individual's capital. Joonsung's contributions included his status as a "talented" student based on high exam scores in the marketing course, his finance and accounting knowledge expertise (accounting certificate), and his relationship with a white female named Marta, which gave him connections to other white students. In addition, his friendly personality made him popular among his friends (Sungjoo, friendship group interview, November 16, 2012). Sungjoo was an expert in finance, and Shinpill an expert in marketing, but Sungjoo was less popular among the three because of his "aggressive personality" [] (Joonsung and Shinpill, friendship group interview, November 20, 2012).

Early in the second academic quarter, I handed a table of the five peer groups to Joonsung, Shinpill and Sungjoo and asked them to tell me who hung with whom on a regular basis in each of the five study groups. On their own initiative, they added colors by each student's name to indicate the friendship groups in each of the five peer groups.

Table 6.3.

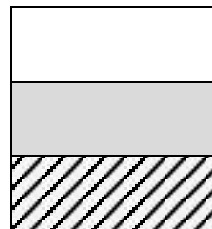
Friendship Circles in the Five Peer Groups

Study Group 1	Study Group 2	Study Group 3	Study Group 4	Study Group 5
*Shinpill	Marta	Mike	Mina	Chris
Joonsung	Junn	Derek	John	Jason
Sungjoo	Leslie	Jaemin	Ruting	David
Tomo	Jake	Liting	Ali	Mark
Justin	Padida	Mohammad	Bona	Zhikun

Participants in study group meetings

Friendship groups

Hangs out with no one in particular



Then, they drew patterns next to individuals who appeared not to have a friendship group, and “hung out” alone. As they talked about each of the group members, they began to make their own assessment of notable students:

Marta is American, she's smart – really good with marketing concept and she used to be in my first group (1st quarter peer group), but I don't think we're that close. (Shinpill, friendship circle interview, November 15, 2012)

[Marta이란 미국 친구는 마케팅 이론 많이 알고 ... 똑똑한 친구인 것 같아요. 그리고 저번 학기에 저와 같은 조였죠. 근데 많이 친하진 않아요]

Listening to Shinpill's evaluation of Marta, Sungjoo notes that Marta was a nice person and a close friend of Joonsung, and draws an arrow connecting Marta to Joonsung on the chart. Near the corner of the paper, Sungjoo had re-written Bona's name on the sheet and marked an "X" next to her name. When I asked what the "X" meant, he claimed that "she seemed to have no real friends" [친한 친구가 없는 것 같아요]. Although Sungjoo did not specifically explain the reason for this evaluation, he did note thereafter that "she showed off too much about her scholarship, but really kept quiet during group work" [장학금을 받았다는 사실 너무 밝히더라구요. 근데 알고보면 그 친구는 그룹에 별로 도움이 안되는 친구죠]. In response to this, Shinpill commented that Sungjoo was being a little harsh about Bona. In defense of his own evaluation, Sungjoo replied, "no, she might have gotten an academic scholarship, but I saw her work on the assignments, and she doesn't know anything" [아니야. 걔 장학금 받았지만 예전에 숙제하는 것 봤는데 아는 것 하나도 없어]. During a conversational lull after Sungjoo's remark, I asked Joonsung about his relationships with other peers. Without much hesitation, Joonsung noted Marta, whom he claimed is a "cool" friend: "We hang out, and sometimes we do our assignments together and then I'd share our answers with our group. So, her group and ours always get good grades on the assignments"[같이 숙제도 하고 그래요. 정답을 우리 조원들과 공유하다보면 그 친구 조와 우리 조와 숙제 점수가 비슷하게 나와요]. On an opposite note, he expressed his opinion about Chris, noting that no one really "hung out" with him: "He is kind of weird. He claims he is different from Korean-Americans. I get it. But the problem is he makes a big deal about it at the most awkward moments. . . [걔 좀 특이해. 아니야- 이상해. 한국 사람 아니라고 강조를 하면서 유럽 사람과 비슷하다고

광고하고 다녀요. 그룹 모임에서 느닷없이 그런 얘기 잘 해요. . .] (Joonsung, friendship circle interview, November 16, 2012).

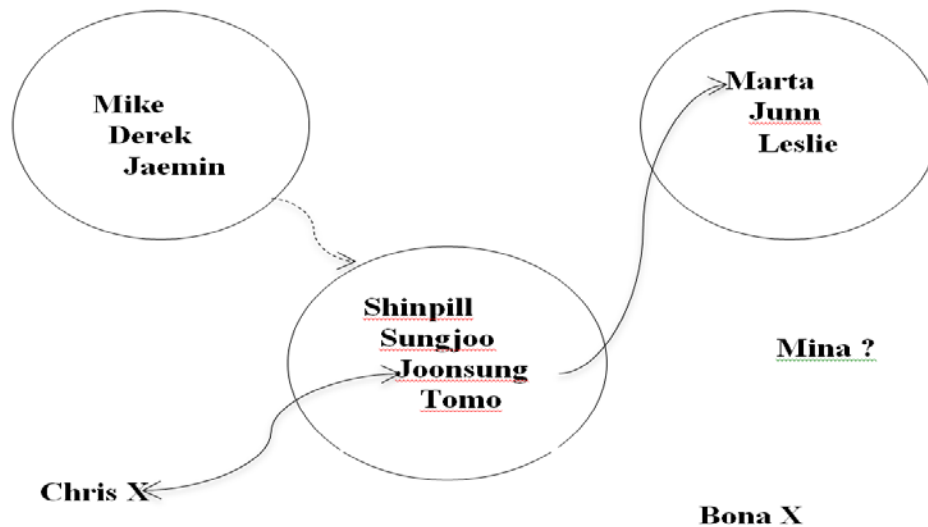


Figure 6. 3. Friendship groups

Note. Circles indicate Intra-group friendships. Single arrows indicate inter-group individual friendships. Dotted lines indicate inter-group friendships. Opposite arrows indicate non-friend relationships. There were also students who had no specific friends, but simply “hung out” alone or with several friendship circles (e.g. Bona, Chris and sometimes Mina)

As they described the web of friendships between and within the peer groups, I continued to take notes and interview students mentioned by the main participants in their evaluation. Based on the interview notes and weekly observations of the friendship circles, I mapped out what the friendship circles may look like (Figure 6.3).

The focal students’ evaluations of individuals in various friendship groups were also based on those who had a distinct knowledge skill or lack thereof. But other social (soft) skills were also important factors for who was considered a friend or not. For example, Marta was noted for having the highest grade point average in the first quarter marketing course, but she

was also well-liked by her peers and was a close friend of Joonsung. On the other hand, students such as Bona and Chris were positioned on the outskirts of the social hierarchy and were considered to be anti-social among their peers (Sungjoo and Joonsung, friendship group interview, November 16, 2012). However, as we will see below, students like Leslie, who was in Marta's group, was well respected as a colleague despite her lack of knowledge in any field.

Examining differences in social capital: Web of friendships and Joonsung.

Examining the internal relationships in every friendship circle is beyond the scope of this chapter. I now look into Marta's friendship group, since she was a close friend of Joonsung and worked closely with his group for group assignments. According to Joonsung and Sungjoo, Marta's friendship group had a slightly different dynamic than theirs. Joonsung noted that not all members in Marta's group had the same or similar weight in their capital (Joonsung, informal conversation, November 23, 2012). For example, Marta was ranked as one of the top students in the marketing class; thus, her capital had more weight than that of her friends. This naturally allowed her to make choices on ways to complete the group projects (Joonsung, informal conversation, November 23, 2012). However, Leslie, an American female student who had worked as a florist prior to her arrival in the program, did not give much input in terms of group assignment discussions. Her limited background knowledge in marketing did little to help her with individual assignments. Rather, she took on the role of organizing group gatherings and baking cookies for her friends. Joonsung, who was also Leslie's friend, noted that her cooking abilities and friendly personality were characteristics that made Leslie unique:

She's my friend and we also work together. She's a real good cook. You know, her cupcakes are like the one[s] downtown—you know that cupcake store? Anyway, she invite[s] us to her house, and it smells like a bakery. When we hangout or just do assignments, she invites us. She's [a] really nice person. (Joonsung, friendship circle interview, November 23, 2012)

As a peer group member during group projects, Leslie may not have had the knowledge skills to make contributions to the content; however, as a friend, her sociable personality and her baking abilities were significant talents that differentiated Leslie from other friends in her friendship group. Moreover, according to Junn, a Korean male student, Leslie was also a “helpful” person:

I think my English is not good, but just average. And I don't think I can help with assignment. So, maybe I have limited function. But, Leslie helps me and everyone feel comfortable. She is good friend. Maybe other people know this basic skill, but she needs my help so I teach her how to understand the graphs. . .Sometime we talk about my culture, and she seem very interested [. . .]. (Junn, friendship circle interview, November, 12, 2012)

When it came to Marta's relationships within the circle, she noted that Junn, Leslie and Joonsung were friends she hung out with, and that Junn and Leslie were “easy going” to get along with and very receptive to her ideas (Marta, friendship circle interview, November 12, 2012).

Furthermore, she felt that Joonsung's finance expertise was integral to her relationship with him, even though it mattered less to Junn, Leslie and Marta's other (white) friends. To Joonsung, Marta was a close friend because they had similar personalities, but also because the two had equal footing in their relationship because both shared a very similar knowledge background (Joonsung, friendship circle interview, November 12, 2012). It was interesting to see how individuals in the friendship circles evaluated one another not only based on the valued knowledge and skills, but also on one's character.

As it turns out, Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung were somewhat accurate with their list of friendship circles (above) and their assumptions about them, as confirmed in my interviews with some of the friendship members. The friendship circles noted in Figure 6.3 were based on interviews with nine students (both focal participants and secondary participants from the five study groups), and observations over the first two academic quarters. The list of friendship

circles noted in the figure only varied slightly from what the Korean focal students claimed. Also because my list of friendship circles came from my particular point of view, my interpretations may differ slightly.

I detected two small differences between the focal participants' interpretation and my own. These differences reflect the idea of how social structures can be constructed in different ways, depending on who does the interpretation. For example, Shinpill and Sungjoo cross-listed Bona with Mina as being buddies who worked together on class assignments; however, in my observations, Mina spent most of her time alone. She appeared to spend very little time with Bona other than meeting for small talk in the hallway after classes. The two focal students also listed Marta as a friend of Jaemin, who was included in Derek and Mike's friendship circle. Though Marta occasionally hung out with Derek to talk about upcoming assignments, she seldom spoke to Jaemin or Mike. She mostly hung out with either Junn or Leslie. Beyond the group boundary, I did see that Marta was a close friend with Joonsung. Finally, Shinpill and Sungjoo listed Chris with Bona, who was in another study group. But they did not list any specific names of friends for Chris other than Bona. Nor did they note that he had no friends but simply claimed that he "hung out" with no one in particular. Based on my interview and observations of Chris with his peer group and the focal Korean participants, I positioned him as a student who preferred to work alone.

These small differences in the friendship groups tell us something about inter- and intra-group hierarchy issues. First, Joonsung and his friends often competed for positions of favor with their instructors (e.g. be recognized for doing good work) and stood in competition with Marta's friendship circle (Observation notes, November 23; December 03). Second, from the beginning of the second quarter until the end, I watched Marta's status as the leader of her friendship circle

and in turn, her peer group. This was clearly illustrated in the physical distance between herself and the group. She strode purposefully as the group tagged along behind her. She talked in a loud voice as her group members listened with little interruption until she finished speaking (Observation notes, November 05, 08, 19, 22). When there were group gatherings, Marta was often the one to initiate outings after the meetings (Observation note, November 29, 2012). While these observations may not fully support Marta's position as leader of her friendship group, they do suggest that she had a significant role in managing the peer group dynamic, yet she was also respected as a friend.

Conclusion: Representation and Peer Social Hierarchy

The examples from the peer groups show that students learned from one another as they shared ideas during group assignment discussions. The content of these group assignments and interactions surrounding the assignments among the peer group members seemed to correlate with the students' interpretation of their peer social hierarchy. Those who had background knowledge of the content materials had more agency as group leaders, and implied their position as academically successful and "competent" students. And this hierarchy seemed to transfer into the friendship group, but to a lesser degree.

As the analysis shows, students' group interactions, from the Korean focal participants' perspectives, showcase their identification choices and exemplify how even such brief performances contain and can reproduce elements of the social order. The analysis also showed how the Korean focal students' ideological perspective on what counts as a valuable resource, and thus who is a resourceful student, strongly reflected a Korean corporate hierarchy which often stresses specialization of one's function and task in the group (*Korean Business Etiquette*, 2004).

Within the peer group, the informal nature of the friendship groups highlighted the political nature of how students, particularly the Korean focal students, maintained and established their social network in the MBA program. The friendship groups reflected the complex web of social relationships and loyalties, a network which is often difficult to tease out and understand without an insider's perspective. With the help of the Korean focal students, my analysis of the friendship group dynamics provided me a glimpse into the focal Korean students' affiliation choices, and how the basis of their choices was strongly informed by an individual's valued knowledge and other social capital.

To further understand the political nature of peer affiliation choices in relation to one's position in the peer social hierarchy, I also featured Chris and Joonsung. Their position in and between peer groups allowed me to see how one's identity claims can also be influenced by how one is positioned by other peers in the peer social hierarchy. If Chris were considered more on the outskirts of the peer social hierarchy, Joonsung may be seen as an individual who had relatively more agency to jockey for a position in and among the peer groups. His symbolic power as the past "model international" students in the marketing class afforded him the social capital to claim a unique "white" identity and to lead the group discussions as he saw fit. Through these two students, I was able to see how "difference" was valued by both the focal Korean students and other group members as it related to the notion of the academically successful student in the peer setting.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

I begin with my reflection of my final interview with Shinpill as I find that his response best reflected many of the focal Korean students' voices about their academic experience in the MBA program thus far:

It is February 08, 2013 and I am meeting up with Shinpill for one of our final interviews. I take out my past field notes, which I had skimmed through the day before. I decided to go back to the notion of academic success, a reoccurring theme from our past interviews. It was also a theme that Shinpill had much to say about when he talked about ways to “figure out the [MBA] system.” I ask him if his ideology of academic success had changed after his first two academic quarters in the program. Shinpill listed a few things that he would have done differently. For example, he noted that he probably would never have worked this hard if he had known grades were not everything to succeed in the program. Nevertheless, for Shinpill, his field knowledge in marketing was a form of symbolic capital and a form of communicative tool to navigate the literacy expectations of the MBA program. It also became an important resource in the construction of his identity among his peers and in the classroom. As Shinpill elaborates on this idea, he notes: “Like I said, I had to figure out the system [the MBA program’s culture and curriculum] [. . .] the only way to get through it was utilizing all the field knowledge I had learned in my undergraduate school” [시스템을 이해하는 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각해요. 새로운 곳에서 잘 적응을 위해서는 그 집단을 파악을 빨리 하는 것이

중요하다고 생각하거든요. 저 같은 경우에는 학부때 배웠던 이론들이이 곳에 적응을 하는데 도움이 많이 되죠...]

Like Shinpill, many of the focal Korean students in this study used their field knowledge and expertise as important resources to navigate the academic literacy activities (e.g., class/group discussions, weekly written assignments, group projects, and presentations) that took place in the ethics class, the marketing class and in the various peer study groups. By examining ways the focal students appropriated these valuable resources in their learning, this dissertation investigated how the students individually and collectively conceptualized the notion of “academic success,” which was best illustrated in the dialogues among themselves, other students, and instructors. As I examined this discourse, I also considered the relationship between knowledge and language, peer social relationships, and the students’ identities which were also important factors in understanding their socialization experience in the MBA program.

This final chapter summarizes the findings I have found relevant to the students’ notion of “academic success” as it relates to their academic socialization experiences. I also discuss the study’s contribution to theory and practice, and present some limitations of this research. I make a full circle and bring this chapter back to the notion of academic success that organizes this study. Below, I begin with a discussion of academic success and how this discourse informed the students’ identity and learning in the three literacy sites.

Conceptualizing Academic Success

The use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in international business has gained increasing attention among researchers of business communication, business discourse in academia, and English for specific purposes (Charles, 2007; Planken, 2005). This trend is well reflected in the MBA program of this study where language skills and the strategic use of

English are integral to business students' success. However, despite English being the main communicative tool for the focal students in this study, they viewed field-related skills and knowledge to be a more significant communicative tool to "get the work done." Thus, for these students, mastering field-related issues and knowledge formed the basis for communicative success, and thus, academic success. This phenomenon was best highlighted in chapters 4 and 6 in which specific business related knowledge, such as marketing and finance expertise, had more weight compared to other skills such as English communication skills. For example, students like Shinpill, Sungjoo and Joonsung who were publically acknowledged and known in the marketing class for such expertise were able to exercise agency and lead group projects that required specific expertise in the field of business. According to the focal Korean students, gaining this agency signified their legitimacy as intellectually competent students among their peers and instructors in their core courses. For those students such as Jaemin, who struggled to perform a specific expertise related to their studies, becoming an active member in the program's student council meetings and using his bilingual skills (Korean and English) as a resource in the MBA student council were alternative means to become "successful" in his own right even if his skills did not always align with the current discourse of academic success.

Types of identity and agency. As the focal students were "figuring out" the academic literacy expectations of the MBA program and conceptualizing the meaning of academic success, certain roles and types of identities emerged and the focal students became recognizable "types" of individuals in the three literacy sites of this study. Such social identification became contingent on the kinds of resources (skills and knowledge) they contributed to their immediate learning context. For example, in chapter 4, three Korean students (Shinpill, Sungjoo, and Joonsung) were deemed "intellectually competent" students in the marketing class by virtue of

their marketing expertise and by ranking in the top three in a marketing project. These students were socially identified as “model international” students in the marketing class and this identity gave them agency as group leaders in the peer study group. For example, in chapter 6, when peer group members gathered to discuss ideas for marketing specific brands as part of their group business projects, students such as Shinpill and Sungjoo appeared to have more agency than other members in the group to voice and have their ideas implemented in the final project. However, not all the focal students in this study managed to find a distinct identity (that is, to be recognized as a “type” of individual) that was always positive. Students such as Jaemin and Chris often struggled to claim a distinct type of identity that was recognized positively among the group of Korean “model international” students, in the peer study group and in the classrooms.

Identity in flux. If the three Korean students (Shinpill, Sungjoo, and Joonsung) were typified as model students in the literacy site of the marketing course and the peer study groups, this identity was challenged in the ethics class by the instructor and a few native speaker female students. Their cultural and individual knowledge about ethics did not always align particularly well with that of the ethics course instructor, and this disalignment contributed to their identity as “ethically questionable” students in this class. The three Korean students continued to struggle in their own way to redeem their positive image as “model international” students in the ethics class. They did so by “working hard” on the written assignments; that is they negotiated their ethical responses on the case study reflection assignments so that they could redeem their positive image (as displayed in chapter 5). In some respects, they were able to redeem their image as “good” students through their good grades on the final projects of this course.

Students such as Jaemin, who spent his adolescent years in the States, and had worked in a U.S. company prior to his arrival in the program fared better in the ethics class compared to

Shinpill, Sungjoo, and Joonsung who were educated and mostly worked in Korea. It may be that Jaemin's exposure to American work ethics contributed to his better understanding of the ethical standards and expectations of a U.S. business ethics class. On the other hand, students like Chris who claimed he had no specific skills did not speak up as much as the other focal participants during any of the classroom discussions in the ethics or marketing class. His main interest was in "getting to know students" in his peer group and participating in open-ended discussions about group projects with his fellow peer members. However his goals did not align well with that of his peer groups' dynamic in which individual roles and tasks were more valued over open-ended group discussions. Students like Chris who struggled to claim a distinct identity for himself managed to find an alternative subject position to participate in the group dynamic: by engaging in representational acts of telling stories about himself and his academic interests during group gatherings (chapter 6).

In sum, some of focal Korean students' field knowledge and expertise in their core courses may not have had much value in such courses as the ethics class; however, they came to have more value in the peer groups where many of the core course projects were completed. The "model international" students continued to use their field knowledge in the literacy activities of their peer study group and to also position themselves and other members in specific ways (and often times marginalizing other students, such as Chris, who they believed did not have a distinct form of field knowledge or expertise). Moreover, while not all the focal Korean students in this study had equal weight in their capital, nor was the value of their capital static, the Korean "model international" students came to have relatively more agency than other students to conceptualize and implement the meaning of "academic success" in the learning space of the marketing class and peer study group.

The Interdiscursive Nature of Academic Success and Learning

In this study, the concept of interdiscursivity (Agha, 2005) was one important analytic tool to examine the interconnection of various academic literacy events that would inform the focal Korean students' learning in the three literacy sites of this study. Interdiscursivity refers not just to how discourses are linked together via various academic literacy events, but also to how such interconnectedness comes to be felt and recognized by the focal Korean students, instructors and other peer members. In this sense, it offers particularly a powerful way of linking present and recent past learning events that influenced the focal students learning in the classrooms in two specific ways, which I discuss below.

First, in chapter 4, when the marketing instructor interdiscursively links a distant past literacy event of a former "model international" student to his current class via storytelling, he aligns intellectual competence (e.g. field-related knowledge) with the image of "successful" and "good" student. In doing so, the instructor construes the notion of successful learning with that of one's intellectual competence in the field of business. This framework of learning is then interdiscursively connected to the students' academic literacy practices in the peer group dynamic (as seen in chapter 6) and given meaning by the Korean "model international" students. In the group dynamic, learning was about knowing how to apply one's intellectual knowledge in the group written assignments and power point presentations. It was also about building meaningful work relationships. Often times these work relationships were built around the kinds of symbolic capital one had and its weight compared to other capitals. Such capital, for example, included field knowledge in marketing, accounting and economics. It also included other "soft" skills such as presentation skills and leadership skills. While such "soft" skills were significant resources for the group assignments, they had relatively little weight in capital compared to that

of field-related knowledge and expertise. Thus, core course field knowledge appeared to be a valuable resource in the focal Korean students' learning in the core courses and their peer study group.

Second, in chapter 5, when a recent past “cheating” event was interdiscursively appropriated in the ethics class discussion, a group of Korean students were challenged by the ethics instructor and a group of native speaker students in the class on their ethical standards in the workplace. As a group of Korean students responded to the ethical nature of the “cheating” event while applying concepts of individualism, collectivism, and social responsibility in their responses, they were learning to negotiate between the Western cultural perspective on ethics in the workplace with that of Korea. This negotiation process was best illustrated in the class discussion among the native speaker students and the instructor. In these discussions, the focal students' responses to various case examples reflected a Korean cultural ideology of collectivism and group responsibility in which group decision and responsibility were more common than an individual one. However as seen in chapter 5, this ideology was not always conducive when students were asked to make an individual decision when faced with an ethical dilemma. Thus, while the students were learning about theories and practices related to the subject matter of ethics, they were also learning how to negotiate their own belief system (both personal and cultural) about ethics with that of the ethics class. And, as they were negotiating their learning of ethics they were also negotiating between two distinct identities in this classroom: “good” students who did well in the ethics class assignments (and got good grades) vs. “ethically questionable” students who continuously challenged the teacher-sanctioned notions of ethics.

What can be concluded from this section is that the interdiscursive interconnection of past events can strongly inform the students' learning. Specifically, interdiscursivity showed that

the ways and the kinds of past academic literacy events instructors appropriated in their current class had an accumulative affect on the focal students' perception of what counts as valuable resources in their learning and on ways to negotiate their learning of a particular subject matter.

Theoretical and Methodological Implications

Theoretically grounded in the research on academic socialization (Barton & Hamilton, 2005; Lea & Street, 2000), this study shows how a group of Korean MBA students constructed a critical stance towards ways of learning with regards to their notion of academic success in a U.S. MBA program. By presenting empirical examples of the students' various identifications and academic literacy stances, this study enriches the literature on academic socialization by countering the myth of the L2 population's assimilation in the Inner Circle setting (e.g. Schumann's acculturation model, 1978) and students' seamless transition from periphery to center in the larger Discourse (Gee, 1996). With a critical stance in mind, I argue that the focal Korean students in this study formulated a discourse of "academic success" that became an important means for them to navigate the academic expectations of the MBA program. This discourse was also a form of symbolic tool for many of the Korean participants because it became a means for them to find legitimacy as "able" students in the MBA community. Another contribution is in how the academic literacy socialization of these students is demonstrated not only through personal narratives of their socialization processes, but also through both their individual and collective classroom dialogues, as well as their dialogues in their peer study groups. The academic socialization analysis that I shared in this study attempted to situate academic literacies and students' academic experiences in their collective and individual voices, and in their lived experiences (e.g., Guerra, 1998).

In terms of the study's methodology, while this study used a qualitative approach, it also used interdiscursivity as an analytic framework from sociolinguistics (Agha, 2005; Silverstien, 2005). By integrating the two framework, this study was able to allow glimpses into the the multi-layered complexities of the focal Korean students' academic experiences. The interdiscursive framework in this study, although not used frequently in academic literacy socialization research, could also be useful in understanding how students react to recent past learning events that may be relevant to their current learning. For example, hearing about and evaluating past learning events from other students as well as instructors could become an anchoring script for new students who are just "figuring out" the academic culture and expectations of their target program of study. As illustrated in this study, the accumulative nature of past events that occurred in different spaces in the MBA program showed how a group of Korean students conceptualized academic success, which became an important symbolic tool for them to navigate the literacy activities of their core courses.

Implications for Educational Practice

Throughout the findings chapters, I addressed how the peer study group was an important space for the focal students to voice their perspectives on the MBA program's educational expectations as they made meaning of them. By tracing the focal students' interaction with other students in their peer study group and the two instructors in this study, I identified factors that were meaningful their socialization processes in a U.S. MBA program. In reporting my findings, I compared and contrasted the trajectory of academic socialization at the individual/collective, social, and institutional levels.

At the micro-level, facilitation of academic socialization can be approached *individually*. By observing and interviewing the focal students individually, I conclude that the degree to

which each student is motivated to attain his immediate and long-term goals may affect his academic achievements and thus his notion of academic success. For example, Sungjoo and Shinpill had a clear goal to return to Korea and use their U.S. MBA degree to build their reputation as “competent” CEOs of their future companies in Korea. Joonsung had a clear goal of wanting to work in Wall Street. He strongly believed that building relationships with his fellow Americans who had prior work experience would help him become immersed in the American culture. Chris kept his options for future jobs open and believed that the MBA program would give him the leverage to find other job opportunities. Jaemin eventually wanted to return to Korea and work for a marketing company, but he also wanted to work a few years in the States to help him maximize his chances of getting a better job when he returns to Korea. Those students who have concrete immediate and long-term goals appear to fare better than those who do not. Moreover, those students who are recognized by the instructors for a particular skill or knowledge fare even better in setting their immediate goals in the first two academic quarters. That is, having clear immediate and long-term goals, and ultimately adapting and refining those goals to the current academic situation, coupled with relevant resources to support their socialization processes seemed to be important factors in becoming “successful” students.

At the meso level, facilitation of academic socialization can be approached *socially*. Social mediation seems to be a significant factor for students’ academic success and their larger socialization to the MBA discourse community. The Korean students’ meaning-making process throughout the various academic literacy activities was achieved through deliberate use of available social resources (as displayed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6). I have identified three points that may help the future Korean and other ESL students’ academic achievement.

First, in addition to field-related knowledge, students may need to be informed of what resources are available in their school community. Although the career center and various workshops related to job search and internship positions can be helpful, Korean students who plan to return to their home country (and who already have jobs waiting for them back home) may not find such resources relevant to their immediate needs. Moreover, they may also not know what social resources are available in their community network other than the ones that are available in the classroom and in peer group settings. For example, a few of the focal Korean students in this study were unaware that they could seek individual assistance from instructors in the course enrollment process, nor did they know that they could make individual requests to redo assignments for better scores. Much of their information about the program and course assignments were shared and circulated within their own ethnic community. Another example of an available social resource, which only a few focal students knew about, was the university's writing center. Through interviews with the MBA staff members, I learned that a business writing consult at the university's writing center provided feedback for MBA students' writing assignments. This service would be useful for ESL students, especially in their initial stage of academic socialization (first academic quarter). As a third example, although none of the focal students were aware of this resource, the linguistics department provided a list of English tutors that offer individual assistance for students' various linguistic needs.

Second, the group of Korean students in this study needed more positive information about the social resources available. For instance, Shinpill, who had a positive experience with the business writing consultant, tended to use the consultant during final exam week. In contrast, Sungjoo stopped visiting the writing center after one encounter when it did not provide service that he had anticipated. Joonsung and Jaemin visited the center, yet found that receiving

proofreading for their weekly assignments was less important than the actual content of their writing. Joonsung ended up asking one of his native speaker colleagues, Marta, to proofread his writing because he believed Marta's feedback on the content was more helpful and relevant to the assignment's goal (informal conversation, November 3, 2012). If students' initial experience is not positive in using such social resources, they seem to stop using them; though these experiences might simply be caused by either their mistaken expectation about the services offered or their belief of not being well-served. More positive and detailed information about the writing center could counteract some of students' mistaken beliefs and encourage them to avail themselves of the service.

Third, student collaboration through peer group work should be continuously emphasized in and outside the classroom. Focal students, Sungjoo, Shinpill and Joonsung, noted that they received substantive intellectual and emotional support in the group discussions. For this reason Shinpill formed his own study group that met in his home to talk about their concerns and struggles with the core course curriculum. Sungjoo in particular found the Korean "model international" study group in the first academic quarter most helpful in adjusting to the MBA "system" because he believed that the group provided a safe place to talk about the educational expectations of the MBA program (informal conversation, September 24, 2012). Through groupwork students are able to pool their information and receive support to enable them to adapt to the rigorous expectations of their program.

At the institutional level, academic socialization can be facilitated in two specific ways. First, given the academic needs and expectations of the focal L2 students in my study, it is necessary to provide training in academic speaking skills in order to emphasize the importance of English as a communicative tool. Unlike the university's ESL (English as a Second Language)

academic writing and communication courses by which L2 students hone their writing skills, Sungjoo and Shinpill noted that there needs to be more “relevant” English writing and speaking classes to support their core course assignments. Lacking this support, reliance on other non-linguistic skills such as field knowledge, became the focal students’ main communicative tool to make sense of their various academic literacy activities (informal conversations. September 30, November 2, 9, 13 2012). While language learning might be best learned in a more “natural context” because the social purpose would be more authentic, the compelling need to complete writing tasks that are specific to the needs of business writing may require the MBA program to make an English communication course closely tied to the MBA curriculum. In doing so, the course may offer far greater support for acquiring the particular discourse skills expected in the MBA courses.

Second, the MBA program could establish an advising system with staff members from backgrounds similar to those of their self-sponsored L2 students in order to understand those students’ perspectives. For example, Jaemin’s two visits to the job fair enabled him to realize the harsh reality regarding his internship opportunities. He told me that he was denied internship opportunities due to his international student visa status (informal conversation. November 13, 2012). At his request, I met with an academic specialist for the MBA program to ask about any merit scholarships available for international students. I was informed that there were none specifically tailored for international students. I learned that there were need-based small scholarships that he could apply for; however; Jaemin resisted the idea of getting one because he felt it would not be beneficial for his resume (November 13, 2012). After listening to such responses, some of the focal students questioned the quality of the administrative services that they were receiving, considering that they were investing thousands of dollars in their MBA

education. Students' perception of the lack of practical administrative support may lead them to depend on other L2 students to obtain information, and this strategy may well be inadequate to meet their needs. Perhaps a buddy system in which students from similar ethnic groups could be tied together during the first academic quarter of their studies may help new L2 students adapt and find their way more easily.

Limitations of Study

I believe there needs to be more empirical research involving specific ethnic groups of L2 graduate students in professional programs in order to provide more in-depth information on the various academic socialization experiences they undergo. For example, this research is needed to document the educational perceptions and experiences of graduate students who are self-supported and to further examine what their graduate degrees symbolize for them. In this project, following only a handful of male Korean students was not enough to illustrate the particular experiences of one ethnic group in the MBA program. Moreover, interviewing female Korean students in this study could have added variety to the descriptions of the academic life of the five Korean graduate students in the program. I also believe more examination of staff members' and other students' perspectives on the MBA program's academic literacy expectations would have further enriched the project.

A limitation also lies in the duration of fieldwork. I believe that eight months of fieldwork may not be sufficient for developing an insider's perspective that would allow me to reach deeper into the focal students' pattern of peer relationships and their meaning making process of the program's academic literacy expectations. A longer relationship with the focal participants may be beneficial to the findings in this study. The participants' response to the notion of academic success may also not have been thoroughly discussed due to the limited time spent on

the field site. Moreover, confined to only eight months of field work, I was unable to document all the various venues of meaning-making and creative processing that my focal students participated in individually and collectively as part of their academic socialization processes. For example, I missed out on many of the student council meetings, the Korean business community workshops related to job search, and other courses in the MBA program that may have shed light on their socialization processes. If time had permitted, some questions I would like to have addressed are: 1) How do native speaker students and other L2 students perceive the notion of academic success, and how do their views differ from those of the focal Korean students? 2) How do the focal students use various academic literacy practices to construct a sense of community of friendship outside the confinements of the program? And, how does this sense of community figure into their lives after they graduate and find jobs? 3) How does the notion of academic success change (or not change) after the first year?

Conclusion

This study of a group of Korean MBA students' academic socialization processes contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of academic socialization by challenging the myth of one dimensional assimilation and transience into their target program of study in a new academic culture. Furthermore, I have explicated these students' academic experiences by proposing that we look into the ways relevant academic literacy events in different spaces and time become interdiscursively connected to the students' current learning. For future studies, this project may offer a few potentially interesting directions that may broaden our understanding of academic socialization and the situation of L2 students navigating a new academic culture that is different from their own.

First, academic socialization research is a burgeoning area with a wide range of possible applications. The multi-site organization of this study opens up important new perspectives for tracing the students' notion of academic success as I follow their collective and individual academic trajectories in the MBA program. Extending this study chronologically to trace incoming students' various ways of socializing into the program and then to conduct follow-up studies of returnees to their home country (as well as those students who decided to get jobs in the States) would be one way to trace their trajectories and examine how their notion of academic success may have changed. Within my own small population of the focal Korean participants, further research would help determine how students perceive academic success and how this notion is negotiated in other learning contexts.

Second, because this study illustrates that social scaffolding through peer interaction can become an important tool for students' academic success (as displayed in Chapter 6), its role in academic socialization could prove to be a productive area of future research. For example, some of the focal students--Shinpill and Sungjoo--took advantage of their peer study group by allocating specific roles to each member so that each member could contribute to completing group projects. Such scaffolding processes may not be apparent in the peer group dynamic, but working effectively and efficiently by allocating specific roles to each member can be seen as part of the learning process and, generally speaking, part of "learning the MBA system."

Third, the importance of the role of English as a communicative tool and as a linguistic capital in L2 students' academic socialization process cannot be overlooked. For instance, further studies on the role of English as a communicative tool in other professional graduate programs in the U.S. (and other countries) may be useful in understanding the value of English in those academic learning contexts. Moreover, further studies on the role of English may shed light on

the possible gap between students' use of English and their self-analysis of their English communicative abilities. Such research could show how this gap may influence the relationship between academic success and (English) language proficiency in professional graduate schools.

Final Comments

By grounding my study in a qualitative framework, I have attempted to illustrate the creative, critical, enabling and positive force of a group of Korean MBA students as they navigate the various academic literacy practices in the program (both collectively and individually). My findings are important because my participants' negotiation of literacies was a unique way of figuring out the various academic literacy expectations in the two classrooms of this study. While the two classrooms in this study do not fully represent their socialization processes into the MBA program, they were significant literacy sites for the focal students in that they struggled most to make sense of these classroom discourses. Moreover, the peer study group was a unique space imbued with different ideologies of academic success among peer group members and even among the focal students. It was also a space where issues of power and identity struggle were most obvious. By observing the three literacy sites, this study shows how the focal students resiliently adapted to their situation, and more importantly, how they contingently and creatively used various resources in an attempt to achieve their goal of academic success.

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Appendix A

Marketing Course Syllabus:

MBA - Marketing Management Syllabus

MBA 501/502 is designed to help you learn general marketing management principles by seeing them applied in a variety of realistic business problems. To that end, our approach to cases is analytical and decision oriented, focused on being managerially relevant. In practically all the cases, you will try to identify and evaluate alternative paths of action, and ultimately choose one.

The objectives for this course are as follows. First, learn terminology, institutions, and programs of modern marketing. Second, strategic analysis of marketing opportunities and communication of marketing decisions will be practiced in case analysis. Third, this course prepares you to take advanced marketing courses. Finally, this course prepares you for more in depth analysis needed in the simulation exercises that you will be required to do in the Marketing component of that course.

- 1. Framework for Marketing Management: Integrated PharmaSim Simulation Experience.
Philip Kotler; Kevin Keller and Interpretive Simulations (Required)**
- 2. Course Readings and Cases Packet (Required)**

Readings

MBA 501 is primarily a case-based course, and it has several lectures that draw on the readings. These readings will help you get more from my lecture presentations, and will often be relevant to the cases. They also familiarize you with marketing terminology that is used by companies and some recruiters. The marketing faculty (WE) believe that all MBAs should have some informative reference material as part of your professional library once you (re)enter the work force. Whether or not you pursue marketing as a profession, you are likely to need brushing up on marketing fundamentals throughout your career. So it is strongly suggested that you purchase the readings and use it during this semester and keep it for future reference.

Pre-lectures

In addition to the readings, I have prepared five (5) web-based lectures which are approximately 20-30 minutes long each. These lectures will be posted on Compass, and cover the basics for each upcoming class; they are essential in facilitating your understanding of the more complex concepts discussed in class. These lectures are mandatory. You will receive credit for having viewed these lectures and Extra-credit for completing a short quiz at the end based on the material that you had just viewed. This Extra-credit will be awarded to students who answer ALL questions correctly.

Cases

The MBA 501 course readings/case packet is available for purchase. You can also secure many of the cases from the Harvard Business School website. The entire packet – cases and readings - is also available for download. In preparation for class you can discuss the case with your colleagues. **All written case summaries unless otherwise indicated are to be treated as individual assignments.** Even when working on case analyses in groups, it is important to read and do some analyses on your own before the meeting. It is a good idea to have your own copies of cases. Most of the cases in MBA 501 are relatively recent, and some are old classics. For MBA 501 it is important to choose cases that illustrate marketing principles clearly, and the cases we are using are among the best that Harvard and other schools have to offer, even if some of them are old. Please note that cases are not used to teach you about different industries. No single case will provide you with an in-depth understanding of an industry or even a company. **CASES ARE ALL SELF-CONTAINED AND YOU WILL NOT NEED ANY ADDITIONAL DATA TO COMPLETE A CASE WRITE-UP. IT WILL BE CONSIDERED A BREACH OF THE HONOR CODE IF YOU USE PREVIOUS WRITE-UPS TO AID YOU – THIS INCLUDES INFORMATION FROM THE INTERNET OR FROM PREVIOUS YEARS' CLASSES**

Evaluation & Grading

Absences

There will be no excused absences from class other than for documented illnesses and deaths in the family, items for which the school has a policy. We understand that you are all busy people and must allocate your scarce time between competing activities (interviews, other course assignments, group meetings, etc.). You are also professionals, free to choose on what you spend time, and to accept both the benefits and costs that stem from those choices. On average, students miss only 2-3 class sessions during a semester, and the 20-30 lost points hardly make a difference in the final grade.

THAT BEING SAID, REMEMBER I AM HERE TO HELP YOU IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THIS COURSE DURING THE SEMESTER. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE.

Computer Usage Policy

Given that you will not need to access the Web during lecture/discussion sessions or case discussions, the Marketing Department has established a policy that all laptops should be off during class. This is especially true during case discussions.

Multitasking, by the way, is a myth. Attention is limited and cannot be shared to the point where both activities are performed to the best of your ability.

Appendix B

Ethics Course Syllabus:

MBA 501: Leadership and Ethics **Professor Kline (pseudonym)**

The topic of "leadership and ethics" is broad. We have limited time together, and will spend it focusing on your values and ethics as applied to problem situations in the world of work. The goal of this examination is for you to think through the choices you make and why, as well as what questions you might ask when dilemmas arise, what tools or resources you might bring to bear on problems and what steps might be taken to prevent similar dilemmas from arising in your future. Specific goals include for you to:

1. Undertake a thoughtful examination of ethics and professional responsibility
2. Explore ways to identify, analyze, approach and resolve matters of professional responsibility and ethics
3. Be exposed to an array of different leadership styles
4. Begin to analyze and understand your own personal values and leadership style
5. Consider cognitive errors that can lead to ethical problems, lapses of professional responsibility and leadership shortcomings

Readings: The No Asshole Rule. Robert I. Sutton, Warner Business Books, 2007.
Course Pack with case studies available through TIS*

Articles posted on Compass 2G

*Note: TIS has two versions of the course pack: one contains both the assigned readings and the cases we will do in class each week. The other, smaller packet, contains only the cases and you will need to download the readings posted on Compass. Please select the approach that best suits your learning style and budget.

Expectations: You are expected to read and study the assigned material before each class session. You will prepare and submit three reflection papers, selecting from among the provided topics. In the final week, you will submit a follow-up paper to your personal ethical dilemma. The final will be a take-home exam. Please bring the readings and cases to every meeting, as we will reference items during class.

Personal Ethical Dilemma: Prepare and submit by no later than noon, Thursday, August 23, a short «200 words), typed description of an ethical problem you have faced at work or school. Submit this by email to drkline@illinois.edu. We will spend time discussing these situations at every session along with the week's ethical dilemma. Dilemmas will have names and identifying information removed before any class discussion but please include your name in your submission so you get credit for meeting this requirement. If you do not wish to have your dilemma discussed in class, please indicate on the document you submit.

A Word on Attendance and Class Participation: This class meets only once a week. It is a heavily discussion-dependent class, with many conversations taking place. You cannot participate, benefit from discussion or contribute to the learning of others if you are not present in both body and attention. This is the reason for the heavy emphasis on

participation without distraction. You are expected to attend every class and to participate fully in all class activities and discussions. Please arrive in a timely fashion prepared to focus. This means turning off all laptops, mobile phones, PDAs, pagers, etc. There is no constructive reason to be using a laptop during a group discussion, class discussion or exercises.

iClickers: We'll be using iClickers in every class. The MBA program has purchased the devices, thus saving you out-of-pocket costs. Please pick up and sign out a clicker and bring it with you to each class, including the first one on August 25.

Academic Integrity: As a student at the University of Illinois, it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the University's policies and procedures on academic integrity (<http://www.admin.xxxx.edu/policy/code/>). Please note as well that this is a course on ethics and leadership, and a failure of integrity in this setting is particularly grave. Violations of academic integrity will be considered a serious offense. Activities such as copying answers on an exam or plagiarizing assignments constitute violations of academic integrity, as do inappropriate study materials including previously prepared solutions to assignments. Penalties can include failing an assignment, failing the course and dismissal from the university. All submissions in this class must be your own, original work.

Appendix C

Shinpill's Peer Hierarchy Notes:

